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## BOARD OF EDUCATION.

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### INFORMATION LEAFLET.

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PAPERS READ AT A CONFERENCE  
ON THE CHOICE OF EMPLOYMENT  
ACT; WITH AN ADDRESS BY THE  
RT. HON. H. A. L. FISHER, M.P.,  
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF  
EDUCATION.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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A Conference of Representatives and Officers of those Local Education Authorities, which are either already exercising or likely to exercise the powers conferred by the Education (Choice of Employment) Act, 1910, was held on the 25th and 26th July 1917 at the Offices of the Board of Education, South Kensington, under the Chairmanship of the Right Honourable J. Herbert Lewis, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Education. The object of the Conference was to consider the need for extending the work carried out under the Act, which empowers Local Education Authorities to make arrangements for giving to boys and girls under 17 years of age assistance with respect to the choice of suitable employment, by means of the collection and the communication of information, and the furnishing of advice. The great advantages accruing from the institution of Juvenile Employment Committees have recently been emphasised by the Interim Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in Relation to Employment after the War, which has called attention to their bearing upon the many difficult industrial problems which will inevitably arise on demobilisation.

The papers read and discussed at the Conference, together with an Address to the Conference by the President of the Board of Education, are now issued for the information of Local Education Authorities and others interested in the question of juvenile employment. It will, of course, be understood that the Board do not necessarily endorse all the opinions and proposals contained in the papers.

L. A. Selby-Bigge

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**ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HON.  
H. A. L. FISHER, M.P.,**

*President of the Board of Education.*

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Mr. Lewis, Ladies and Gentlemen : I am very glad to show my personal interest in this interesting Conference, a Conference of experts, met together to consider in a practical form one of the most important problems in the whole sphere of educational endeavour. There are, of course, some districts in England where this problem of drafting school children into industry solves itself. There are some towns where there is a predominant industry which naturally absorbs all, or the greater part, of the available child labour. The factory gates are open ; industry is almost hereditary, and there is a constant and unimpeded flow of child labour from the schools into the factories.

Whether this automatic process be desirable or not, I do not pretend to determine. But these districts are in a minority. In a very large part of England there is a great body of child labour which may be diverted either into this channel or into that channel, according to the presence of a directing agency, and it is a matter of vital social importance that in every district where these conditions prevail, there shall be an intelligent and watchful agency prepared to divert labour into those channels of work which are likely to be most fruitful, and to divert it from channels which lead nowhere and are likely to be barren.

I gather that there has been some discussion as to the relative advantages of two types of organisation for dealing with this problem. I have my own views, and they are decided views, as to which type of organisation is in reality, and in most places, best adapted for the purpose which we have in view ; but I do not propose to go into that question now. I will merely state that whatever the Committee may be, the really important thing is that it should be a good Committee, that it should be a Committee of capable and devoted persons, that it should be assisted by a good Executive Officer, and that it should have the advantage of the aid of capable After-Care Committees.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me allude to a point which impresses me very forcibly as Minister of Education. This country has now enjoyed a system of compulsory public elementary education for a period of about 50 years. Nevertheless, although great progress has been made, and although



I believe it to be true to say that our public elementary school, taken at its best, can bear comparison with any public elementary school in any other country in the world, I think it is also true to say that our system of education has not acquired that degree of public confidence which in reality it deserves. Many people complain that it is costly. Some people complain that it is ineffective; and there are a large number of people who act upon the assumption that we have no system of public education at all.

It is that large and unintelligent body which requires to be converted. At the beginning of the war, when first the shortage of labour became apparent, a raid was made upon the schools, a great raid, a successful raid, a raid started by a large body of unreflecting opinion. The result of that raid upon the schools has been that hundreds of thousands of children in this country have been prematurely withdrawn from school, and have suffered an irreparable damage, a damage which it will be quite impossible for us hereafter adequately to repair. That is a very grave and distressing symptom. We even find magistrates up and down the country giving the weight of their authority to the proposition that children of 11 years of age may be safely withdrawn from school and drafted into industry on the ground that industry is a matter of national importance, and with the implication that education is not a matter of national importance.

Then, again, we find that in districts where we have excellent Junior Technical Schools, schools framed for the express purpose of preparing pupils for the industries of the locality, it often arises that the foremen of the factories in the neighbourhood pay no attention whatever to the reports of the schoolmasters and to the attendance of the pupils. So far as the industry in the locality is concerned, these institutions might as well not exist. That, again, is a discouraging circumstance, and that is one of the obstacles which a Conference such as this will, I trust, succeed eventually in overcoming.

An allusion has been made to the possibility of continuation education. I need hardly remind you that if Parliament should think fit to sanction a scheme of continuation education, it will become of very great importance to devise some adequate machinery in connection with the schools of this country for the placing of the children who are receiving this education. One of the great recommendations of continuation education is that it will enable the educational system of the country to be brought into closer and more continuous relation with the industries.

It has been argued that the establishment of Committees under the Education Authority should be made compulsory, and I am sadly disappointed that during the seven years which have elapsed since the Act of 1910 was passed, so few authorities have taken advantage of the facilities which are afforded

them. I believe I am right in saying that only some 65 or 66 authorities have taken advantage of the Act, and that in many regions of this country where the utility of a Choice of Employment Committee is most obvious, and the lack of it is most apparent, no steps have so far been taken to remedy the want or to supply the need.

It occurs to me that it is quite possible that one of the reasons which has retarded the adoption of the Act has been that the Local Education Authority has felt that the financial inducements are insufficient. This is a matter which I am having under my consideration. I am not able to make an announcement upon the point this afternoon; but I can assure the Conference that this question of the financial support to be given to Choice of Employment Committees is one which will not be left out of my regard.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I think I have said enough to show you what a close and sincere interest the Board of Education takes in your work, how completely we share your aspirations, and what a great sense of importance we attach to the correlation between education and industry, which it is your principal mission to promote.

## FIVE YEARS' WORK AND ITS RESULTS.

*By D. S. CRICHTON, Chairman of the York Juvenile Employment Committee.*

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### INTRODUCTION.

Some years ago an employer giving evidence before a Commission on Juvenile Employment stated that 90 per cent. of the boys who entered industrial life had no choice; they were compelled to take what offered at the moment. Economic pressure and the indifference of parents as to the future of their children were no doubt largely responsible for this state of things. Another cause, however, was the difficulty of bringing the right boy and the right job together. Keen head teachers undoubtedly did much to assist their boys to obtain the right openings, and some parents thought no trouble too great to insure that their lads had a good start in life, but in the case of the mass of boys leaving school there was lacking that organised effort which was required to enable them to choose wisely and to think of the future rather than of the immediate present, and to prevent the waste of valuable material and ability. After giving the matter full consideration, the York Education Authority decided in 1912 to open a Juvenile Employment Bureau, and the object of this paper is to give some account of the working of the Bureau since that date. We have been fortunate in having as our Juvenile Employment Officer, Mr. W. M. Temple, formerly one of our most trusted head assistants. His ability, his enthusiasm, and his knowledge of boys have been of very great value to the Committee. I need hardly say that I am indebted to him for a large part of this paper. For him, as for myself, I should like to ask the indulgence due to busy men who are endeavouring to get through a great deal of "war work" in addition to the ordinary day's duties.

In connection with an organisation of this character, it is comparatively easy to give a record of work that has been accomplished during the period it has been operating, but it is not at all easy to state precisely what may be the result of that effort; some evident effects appear, but how far one is justified in claiming those effects as a direct outcome of a particular effort is open to question; on the other hand, results may, and most likely do exist which have not yet become apparent, for, in the case of effort made to influence the free will and direct the attitude of mind of free thinking beings, one must recognise that it is a casting of bread upon the waters which may only appear after many days.

Therefore, though we may set out certain results which may fairly be claimed to have been produced, and which are of such a nature and of such a magnitude as to lead us to consider that we are justified in continuing our efforts, we feel that we cannot claim to be as definite in stating results as in recording effort.

#### FUNCTIONS OF THE JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.

The population of the City of York is 82,282, of whom 14,193 are in attendance at the elementary day schools. The outflow of children from the schools is about 1,300 annually, so that there are about 4,000 children between 14 and 17 years of age in the city. The Bureau is the means whereby the school system and the industrial system are to be linked up; its essential duty is to guide the school-leaving children with a view to their industrial employment. Its particular functions may be stated as follows:—

- (1) To advise boys and girls as to what work they are fitted for by their ability, taste, character and education.
- (2) To supervise, if necessary, the young worker after he is placed.
- (3) To give advice and information to children as to a proper course of further education.
- (4) To gather information about local industries upon which to base advice to applicants for employment.
- (5) To register applicants and bring them into touch with employers.

Here is given a brief survey of the work that has been accomplished in connection with the City of York Juvenile Employment Committee over a period of four years and five months.

#### *Candidates for Employment.*

The Committee sets great value upon a school record being obtained in respect to candidates for employment, and arrangements are made whereby head-teachers of elementary schools in the city supply this a short time before a child is due to leave school. When a candidate applies for whom a card has not previously been supplied, a special request to his head-teacher is made; this applies also to schools other than those under the authority of the local Education Committee, and records have been obtained from secondary schools and also from other towns. In the period under survey 6,557 school reports have been supplied to the Bureau.

The number of candidates for employment is 6,221, and they have made 7,279 applications for work. Of the applicants 3,088 made application either immediately on leaving school or within 12 months of that date; the number of children reported leaving school is 5,258, so that it is estimated that over 58 per cent. of the school leavers have sought work through



the agency of the Bureau. In over 2,000 cases a parent has accompanied the child to make inquiries respecting employment. These facts lead us to believe that the agency is valued as a means of obtaining good situations, reliable information, and advice.

#### *Vacancies Notified.*

The Bureau has also been well used by employers in need of workers; orders representing 6,526 vacancies have been notified, and 4,833 of them have been filled through our agency. Since December 1914 it has not generally been necessary to canvass employers for openings. Previous to that time employers were visited in order to secure their orders in case of a lack of suitable openings for the candidates on the books, and throughout the period efforts of this nature have been employed to secure openings for special cases.

Both in regard to applicants for work and employers' vacancies the Bureau has been used in respect to high grade as well as low grade vacancies, but special attention has been given to an endeavour to obtain high class openings and to carefully select candidates for these. Constant effort has also been made to bring before both boys and girls the advantage of taking up a class of work which offers fair prospects of permanency and of good training. The result has been a considerable growth in the percentage of children placed in skilled work.

#### *Placings in Skilled Employment.*

The following table shows what percentage of the placings were in work of a skilled nature:—

					Boys.	Girls.
					Per cent.	Per cent.
1913	-	-	-	-	23	4
1914	-	-	-	-	31	17
1915	-	-	-	-	35	39
1916	-	-	-	-	37	48

It should be explained that in 1915 and 1916 the high percentage in the case of the girls is due to their being largely employed as clerks in military offices; but, on the other hand, it is only fair to mention that the girls supplied by the Bureau for these particular openings were good class candidates, and gave satisfaction to the military authorities.

The placings in skilled work include the following:—

					Boys.	Girls.
Clerical work	-	-	-	-	266	245
Business sales	-	-	-	-	97	124
Chemist	-	-	-	-	2	—
Dentist	-	-	-	-	4	1
Photographer	-	-	-	-	1	10

	Boys.	Girls.
Motor body builder - - - - -	5	—
Cabinet-maker - - - - -	7	—
French polisher - - - - -	10	—
Upholsterer - - - - -	4	—
Various building trades - - - - -	92	—
Printing trades - - - - -	24	8
Lithographer - - - - -	5	—
Engineering trades - - - - -	100	—
Scientific instrument makers - - - - -	159	—
Musical instrument makers - - - - -	1	—
Watchmaker - - - - -	2	—
Iron moulders - - - - -	11	—
Bakers - - - - -	7	—
Millers - - - - -	2	—
Shipwright - - - - -	6	—
Brush makers - - - - -	4	—
Dyer and cleaner - - - - -	1	—
Tailors and boot and shoe makers - - - - -	23	—
Saddlers - - - - -	8	—
Nursery gardeners - - - - -	5	—
Farm workers - - - - -	65	—
Tailoring, corset making, dressmaking and millinery.	—	40
Art needlework - - - - -	—	1
Confectioner - - - - -	—	1

*Blind-alley Employment.*—Boys who are placed in work of a temporary character are kept on a special register, and are recalled when permanent openings occur for which they are suitable.

Before this section of the report is left, it should be mentioned that the leading engineering firm in the city, to enter which there is keen competition, has taken all its apprentices through our agency since May 1914, and recently another very large firm, with a world-wide reputation in engineering, has also applied to us for the boys they required. Many smaller firms besides deal exclusively with the Bureau for apprentices. This is an indication of the value set by employers upon the Juvenile Employment Committee's Bureau, and it may be considered that we have established a reputation for careful selection of candidates.

#### AFTER CARE.

##### *After-Care Committees.*

At the time the Juvenile Employment Committee was formed there were four care committees in existence in the city. Through the direct efforts of the Committee this number was

increased to thirteen with the purpose of providing agencies of after-care for boys and girls who needed advice and guidance during the first two or three years of their industrial life. These committees were associated with various schools, and their members were responsible for looking after the welfare of certain boys and girls who were recommended by their head-teachers for attention. Very valuable work has been done by these committees, but it has been one unfortunate result of the war, that, though the need for after-care has increased rather than decreased, it has been found more and more difficult to obtain a sufficient number of voluntary workers to meet the needs of the situation, because some of the younger and most energetic men have gone to military service while, at the same time, special work connected with hospitals and other military institutions has caused a great drain upon the energies of others, both men and women. The value of after-care has, however, been sufficiently demonstrated to lead us to see the advisability of developing it as much as possible when the end of the war will release the voluntary workers needed for this purpose.

#### *Other After-Care Work.*

The work done by these committees does not, however, represent all the after-care effort put forward. A great amount of oversight of boys and girls is exercised by the officials of the Juvenile Employment Bureau in respect to apprentices, errand boys and other blind-alley workers, children suffering from physical defects and all those who need to be visited in connection with their attendance at Continuation Schools. A very considerable portion of time and effort have been given by the Juvenile Employment Officer to what is purely after-care work. In connection with continuation school attendance alone, he has visited 2,645 homes and drawn up reports setting out information obtained in the course of this work. These reports show that while evening continuation school classes can be improved in respect to attendance by visiting children's homes, that improvement cannot be expected to go beyond a certain point, which will leave a large proportion of young workers outside the schools through no fault of their own. Some of the hindrances in the way are briefly set out as follows :—

- (a) Other engagements, such as choir practices, boy scout parades, and other classes connected with religious and social movements.
- (b) Work shifts other than those arranged to terminate before the hour at which the schools open. Glass workers and railway employees are seriously affected by this, as it generally occurs that one week in two or one in three are the only occasions when these workers have the evenings free. The difficulties in

the way of rearranging classes for their special benefit are too serious to permit of it being done.

- (c) Boys and girls in business find it difficult to attend. Business houses are usually open right up to, and over, the hour when classes commence. Business people find it difficult in the last busy hour of the day to grant concessions to young employees. Moreover, in the case of the younger employees the business day is generally sufficient strain upon their strength.
- (d) Overtime work. This has of necessity been largely increased in workshops and factories during the last two and a half years; and though it may only be one hour extra, it has either left insufficient time to get from work to class or so seriously drawn upon the strength of the children, as to make attendance at school a doubtful benefit. One of the most common reasons given for non-attendance is weariness.
- (e) Workers in domestic service are usually required for duties in the evening except for, perhaps, one evening per week.

It is found that many boys and girls possessed of physical vigour and imbued with ambition to make a position for themselves are keen enough to take advantage of evening classes and to sacrifice leisure and recreation. For such, the period 14 to 21 years of age is probably the most strenuous of their lives. For others of weaker physique or lacking in ambition, the question arises whether, from the nation's point of view, they will become better citizens and more valuable workers by devoting all their energies to the pursuit of their daily work in their business, or by being permitted (or compelled, if need be) to use some part of their energies in improving their education. If the latter point of view be taken, then it will be necessary for arrangements to be made for the establishment of day classes, with compulsory attendance at the course of instruction as part of the day's duties.

### *Enquiries Conducted.*

In order to procure information of a useful character to guide the policy of the Committee, several enquiries have been conducted. These have been fully set out in the annual reports, but in an article of this length it is only possible to make brief notes on them.

1. *September, 1913.*—An enquiry as to which occupations are responsible for throwing boys of from 17 to 21 years of age on the labour market. This consisted in the examination of 500 cards of men who had registered at the Labour Exchange between the ages of 17 and 21 years.



The report showed the number in each occupation who had—

- (1) Obtained work in their original occupation.
- (2) Failed to enter their original occupation.

On the whole, the enquiry did not satisfy the expectations set upon it, as, owing to the lack of data on the Board of Trade cards examined, we were not enabled to draw definite conclusions as to whether the trade or the worker was chiefly in fault.

2. *Employment of School Children out of School Hours.*—Enquiries have been made in 1913, in 1914, and in 1915 as to the extent to which children, not exempt from school, are employed out of school hours.

These enquiries have established the fact that not only are children largely employed for long hours at wages that are not commensurate with the services rendered, but also that, in the majority of cases, the energy of the children so employed is drained to the point of injuring their chances of making the best use of their lessons at school.

The Committee, while recognising that a limited amount of work would not injure, but might even be beneficial, to the health, and, so, to the educational advancement of children, were of opinion that too much was being required of these young workers. A recommendation was therefore made that bylaws should be adopted which might protect school children from over-strain, and they drew up suggested rules. These were adopted by the City Council, and were awaiting the sanction of the Home Secretary when the War broke out. The difficulties of the labour problem, thus caused, led to these bylaws being set aside for the time being.

3. *Inquiries into the Industrial Careers of Boys in Relation to their Standard of Educational Attainment.*—These inquiries have been conducted over three successive years, and tables have been prepared which show, side by side with the educational attainment of the boys, the percentages of those who started in skilled, low-skilled, and unskilled work, the number of situations they had held, and the classification of their last situation.

The object of these inquiries was to examine how school training, or the lack of it, affects the chances of boys to obtain and retain employment in skilled work. One writer in the "Sunday Chronicle," who claimed to represent the unanimous opinion of a body of employers controlling 200,000 men, has declared that "Any book-learning outside the rudiments of the three R.'s is a matter outside the requirements of the avocation of from 90 to 95 per cent. of the usual manual workers, and the other 5 or 10 per cent. would attain to leading positions by their own initiative if three quarters of the existing aids to learning were abolished."

If this is the true value to place on the education given in our schools, there should be little or no relation between the schools and the industrial careers of children; in fact we might expect that children to whom "book-learning" is uncongenial would find their element in the more practical work of the shops and surpass their fellows in their industrial careers. But these inquiries indicate that a very close relationship does exist between the school career and the industrial career, and if it be considered how many influences, such as hereditary gifts and drawbacks, varied degrees of parental control, social relationships, personal friendships, economic family circumstances, and other unknown factors act and re-act in various ways, it is quite remarkable to find how closely the school career is indicative of what the industrial career will be. These inquiries show clearly that, starting with the boys of comparatively high educational attainment and passing down the scale of school standards, there is a corresponding steadily descending line on the percentage of those who can obtain and retain situations in work of a skilled nature. The accompanying graph has been constructed to illustrate the conclusions obtained by inquiry into six sets of boys during three successive years. The result of the inquiry confirmed the Committee in the view that in strongly advocating parents to allow their children to stay at school as long as possible, they were acting in the best interests of both parents and children.

4. *Enquiries into the Careers of Applicants of 16 Years.*—In 1915 and 1916 the careers of those boy applicants who have reached 16 years of age have been considered with a view to getting information as to why they are on the labour market.

Considering the number of situations held by these boys previous to their application, the following remarkable fact is shown :—

Those who had had more than two situations were as follows :—

Of the Secondary School Boy applicants -	% 5
Of the St. ex VII.    "    "    "    -	38
Of the St. VII.       "    "    "    -	46
Of the St. VI.        "    "    "    -	62
Of those below St. VI.   "    "    "    -	71

Of the 216 applicants, 19 came direct from school, 45 from their first situation, 33 from their second, 50 from a third, 25 from a fourth, and 44 had previously had more than four situations. Thus 55 per cent. had had more than two situations and 70 per cent. more than one. This seems to indicate that the majority of these boys were on the market through some unsatisfactory element in themselves.

5. *Juvenile Employment after the War.*—In 1916 the Committee considered what steps should be taken to provide for the

needs and welfare of juvenile workers in the future. This has led to the question being raised as to what effect the demobilisation of troops may have upon the labour market, and what the conditions of trade and the consequent demand for workers may be at the end of the war.

The Committee came to the conclusion that advice and help should be sought from employers of labour. Accordingly over 50 employers were interviewed by the Juvenile Employment Officer, who collated their expressed opinions and any information they could give. He then drew up a statement based on this setting out how the various occupations of the city were likely to be affected. (*See Annual Report for 1916.*)

At the same time, he sought to learn what the attitude of employers would be towards the idea of apprentices and clerks attending day continuation classes as part of their day's work. The result of this part of the inquiry leads one to think that a fair proportion of employers may be willing, after the war, voluntarily to permit apprentices in skilled trades to attend day classes. The same conclusion cannot be drawn in the case of clerks, as the general opinion of employers seems to be that those engaged in clerical work have a better opportunity than other workers of pursuing their studies in their leisure time.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

Perhaps it may be well to give, in the form of question and answer, a general summary of my views as to the work of the Bureau in relation to the needs to satisfy which it was brought into existence.

##### *(1) Has the Scheme given Children and their Parents better Facilities for obtaining good Employment?*

Undoubtedly. Children and their parents have come to recognise that they may be saved a long and weary search for suitable work by using the Bureau, where they may not only ascertain the openings available, but also receive advice as to the choice of employment. When I have spent an evening at the Bureau, I have been struck by the willingness both of guardians and of children to discuss qualifications in reference to possible posts and to ask for advice and accept suggestions made by the officials with regard to the kind of employment to be sought. Not infrequently parents have agreed to keep the children at school till some more promising and suitable vacancy is notified. Every parent who has a child leaving school is personally invited to use the Bureau as a means of finding the right niche for the child in the industrial world, and by careful and sympathetic consideration of each individual case, the Bureau has established a reputation for providing reliable, because disinterested, advice. When we take into account the fact that two of the largest industrial concerns in the city, which



absorb hundreds of boys and girls annually, have only made partial use of the Bureau because of their own long-established and satisfactory arrangements for engaging labour, I think it will be granted that our figures as to the number of applicants and placings are very encouraging.

(2) *Has it enabled Employers to get the Employees they want?*

The fact that the Bureau has in the past year been used by a larger number of employers than ever before is, perhaps, not a conclusive answer to this, as employers in York, as elsewhere, have been driven by the need for labour to use every possible means of getting into touch with the "market." More positive proof is to be found in the continued patronage of employers and in the constant expressions of satisfaction that are received from them. If employers offer good wages and conditions they can generally be satisfied. After his appointment and with a view of establishing the Bureau on sound lines, our Employment Officer personally visited very many of the employers and, where possible, made himself acquainted with their requirements, and with the various classes of work on which boys were engaged and for which the employer was likely to require recruits. These visits were the means not only of introducing the Bureau to the notice of the employer and of assuring him of our desire to assist him, but of enabling Mr. Temple to form some judgment of the qualifications required for particular classes of work. This knowledge, supplemented by Mr. Temple's experience as a teacher, has no doubt contributed largely to the success of his work.

(3) *Has it enabled Employers to establish Closer Relations with the Education Authority?*

Yes; the Juvenile Employment Committee and Bureau may be said to have established "lines of communication" which give promise of becoming more and more effective. Representative employers have been co-opted as members of the Committee. Various enquiries, conducted by the Juvenile Employment Officer have brought to the notice of employers the willingness of the Education Authority to assist them by providing special classes for the benefit of their younger employees. In one instance, day classes have been established for the apprentices of a large firm; in another a special scheme of instruction has been arranged; conferences with employers have resulted in the establishment of trade classes; and employers generally have been urged to give their employees the advantage of Continuation Classes bearing upon their work. Representatives of the Master Builders' Association have conferred with members of the Education Authority upon the scale of wages of apprentices in the building trades, and also upon



the provision of further education for their younger employees. Before the war, an attempt was made to induce employers to support a scheme for the provision of classes for errand boys and others following "blind-alley" occupations. Unfortunately this scheme did not mature, mainly because it was not found possible to put it into operation before the war.

*(4) Has the After-Care Organisation thrown Light on the Social Condition of the City?*

I regret to say that the war has greatly interfered with the development of this side of our work. Our Committees have lost many valuable workers, and those who have remained have had very little leisure to do more than give their attention to the few individual cases which have been reported. We hope, however, that under more normal conditions the activities of the After-Care Committee may be renewed, expanded and intensified, and that the experience of the members may be of great value to all interested in the social well-being of the city.

*(5) Has the Bureau as a whole become an Intelligence Department with regard to the requirements of adolescents, and the possibilities of meeting these requirements.*

Taking into consideration the difficulties and confusion of the past three years, I think that we can say that the Bureau has proved of great service in this respect. Mr. Temple has been able to give first-hand information in reply to two or three inquiries, such as that instituted by the Y.M.C.A., regarding the needs of adolescents and the existing organisations which, if developed, may be capable of meeting these needs. In addition, the work of our Domestic Service Sub-Committee (which advises and "follows up" young girls entering domestic service), and of the Juvenile Organisations Committee, is the direct outcome of questions forced upon our attention through investigations conducted through the Bureau. Though the recently-formed Juvenile Organisations Committee is at present concentrating its attention on the provision of suitable recreation for school children, we are also working in conjunction with officials of boys' and girls' clubs, the Y.M.C.A., scout-masters and others, on the problem of the adolescent, and we hope to be able to make a united effort to provide the means of dealing to some extent with this problem next winter.

The Bureau is also in the ordinary course of its work, as well as by its special inquiries, putting us in possession of data which will be of immense value to us when we come to consider what York can and ought to do in the matter of providing further education for the youth of the city. My own personal opinion is that, largely as a result of the work of the Bureau and of discussions and conferences initiated by it, employers and the citizens generally are becoming more familiar with the

need for, and the advantages of, systematic training for boys and girls for some years after leaving school. I trust that a conference which we propose to hold shortly and to which we shall invite employers and parents as well as teachers, managers and others more directly connected with the education of the city, may have the effect of further stimulating the interest of the citizens generally in schemes for dealing with this phase of our work as an Education Authority.

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This GRAPH represents the RESULTS OBTAINED from INQUIRIES into the CAREERS of 3,449 Boys resident in a provincial town.



The line at the top of the dark shading in each column shows the minimum percentage in the six inquiries, the line at the top of the light shading shows the maximum per centage.

## THE AUTHORITY AND THE JUVENILE.

*By SPURLEY HEY, Director of Education, Manchester.*

### I.—THE REFERENCE TO THE CONFERENCE.

I understand that the Conference is intended to deal primarily with the experience gained during the last few years in the working of Juvenile Employment Schemes, especially schemes formulated under the Education (Choice of Employment) Act, 1910. I have had the somewhat unusual experience of formulating and developing three separate Choice of Employment Schemes in important commercial and industrial centres, and as time goes on I am more and more convinced of the real value of such schemes. But these schemes deal with a comparatively short period of time during early adolescence. They deal almost solely with the employment side of the child's life and, therefore, are merely complementary to that fuller life which includes the physical, moral, and mental development of the juvenile. For these, and many other reasons, I propose to treat the subject allotted to me in a comprehensive manner, rather than to confine myself entirely to the question of Choice of Employment Schemes.

### II.—THE PUBLIC AWAKENING RESPECTING CHILD WELFARE.

Local government is the basic principle underlying the methods of administration in this country—and, whilst there has been, during the last few years, considerable devolution of government from central to local authorities, it is probable that this tendency will be even accelerated in the near future. Whilst Government Departments, acting as central authorities, should properly continue to act in a supervising and advisory capacity, local authorities should more and more become the executive administrators of their own affairs. Amongst the many important matters administered by local authorities, there is none more important than the work carried on in connection with the welfare of the juvenile throughout the period of childhood and early adolescence. The 20th century has seen a real awakening of the public conscience in respect of its duty to the youth of the nation, and during this period efforts have been made which have resulted in establishing something in the nature of a charter of child welfare. This greater concentration of the public mind and effort upon the proper care, training, and development of children has been constantly increasing during the last 20 years and, whilst there is much to create feelings of sadness and sorrow in the present day, there is at



least the certain knowledge that at no time within the memory of the present generation was there a more earnest determination to cherish our young people than is evident on all hands to-day. The result of the many efforts of the last few years has been a large output of legislative and administrative enactments on behalf of children, and whilst much of this output could be made of immense power for good, the circumstances under which it has been produced, or under which it must be applied, have seriously diminished its potential value.

### III.—MULTIPLICITY OF AUTHORITIES.

These circumstances are evident to all who are engaged in administration concerning child welfare. There is no more fruitful source of over-lapping, loss of efficiency, and conflict of effort, than in the provisions which allow so many different authorities, both central and local, to deal with the child in respect of the several activities of his daily life. The outstanding local authority is, of course, the city or borough council; but even this authority does not commit the care of the whole child to any one of its committees. Whilst it is compelled by law to refer the child's educational welfare to one of its committees, in many instances it commits the care of the child in respect of employment out of school hours to another committee, the administration of its byelaws on street-trading to another committee, and so on. In Manchester, the Education Committee is responsible to the local authority for the educational welfare of the children, the Watch Committee administers the authority's byelaw on street-trading, whilst the Sanitary Committee is engaged on behalf of the authority in dealing with byelaws in connection with the employment of school children out of school hours. It may be said that in some of these matters it is entirely within the discretion of the local authority to set up its own local arrangements, but in the promotion of legislation it should be recognised that such matters as street-trading and the employment of school children out of school hours, though extremely important in themselves, are comparatively small when added to the immense responsibilities in respect of child life devolving upon the Education Committee, and that they could be most suitably and efficiently carried out by the Committee (the Education Committee) to which these larger interests are delegated.

### IV.—CENTRAL OVERLAPPING THE CAUSE OF LOCAL OVERLAPPING.

Division of responsibilities in respect of the juvenile is even more peculiar and confusing in the case of central authorities than in the case of local authorities; indeed, central overlapping is largely the direct cause of local overlapping. The

Board of Education has ultimate responsibility over a longer period of child life than any other central authority, but, whilst the Board of Education possesses such large interests and responsibilities in the supervision of child life, the Board of Trade may, through its juvenile advisory committees, set up employment schemes for juveniles between the ages of 14 and 17; the Local Government Board may supervise the education of children chargeable to poor law authorities; the Home Office is called upon to approve local byelaws dealing with employment of school children out of school hours, to approve through the factory surgeon young people for employment in factories, shops, and mines, to supervise industrial schools and reformatories and to deal with young children brought before the magistrates.

#### V.—INCIDENTAL DETERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.

Statistics issued some time ago indicate that, whilst the Board of Education deal with nearly 6,000,000 children in elementary schools, the Home Office and the Local Government Board together supervise approximately 100,000 children in residential institutions.

This division of interest and responsibility, both in connection with the local and central authority, should be removed. The present condition of affairs produces conflict of interest and loss of efficiency, and acts against the welfare of the children. There should be, in these matters, one central authority—the Board of Education, and one local authority—the Education Committee, charged with the important work of guarding all the many sided interests of the child life of the nation.

#### VI.—THE PERMISSIVE PRINCIPLE IN JUVENILE LEGISLATION.

I have attempted to show that the present arrangements with regard to the responsibilities of the several authorities charged with child welfare are determined too readily by circumstances. I have further stated that the circumstances under which the legislation for child welfare is applied tend to diminish the potential value of such legislation; I refer to the fact that some of the more important provisions of the legislative output of the last few years have been optional or permissive in character. I strongly deprecate optional legislation where the real interests of the Juvenile are concerned. There are too many factors brought into play, when the adoption of permissive powers is considered, to allow of the interests of the child receiving adequate consideration.

An excellent example of the great potential value of legislation which is prevented from attaining full fruition is afforded by the Employment of Children Act, 1903.

Section 1 of this Act applies to the employment of school children out of school hours. This section makes it permissible for the local authority to promote byelaws permitting or prohibiting such employment.

Less than one-third of the local authorities have availed themselves of the powers conferred under this section of the Act. Even where the local authorities have so availed themselves, the byelaws promoted are subject to the approval of the Home Office and, presumably, subject to the supervision of the Home Office. But in a matter so vital to the interests of children the powers ought not to be in any sense permissive, but should be obligatory upon all local authorities.

The Employment of Children Act, 1903, really illustrates most of the drawbacks I am endeavouring to place before the Conference. Its most important sections are optional, and ought to be compulsory. Even when these optional powers are adopted by a local authority they are not infrequently exercised locally through some committee other than the Education Committee, whereas it ought not to be possible for such powers to be exercised locally by any other committee than the Education Committee; whilst in all cases where byelaws are promoted locally such byelaws must be approved and their administration supervised by the Home Office, whereas it ought not to be possible for such approval and supervision to be exercised by any other central authority than the Board of Education.

#### VII.—A MANCHESTER ENQUIRY.

In a matter so closely affecting the welfare of children, it is clearly the duty of local education authorities to protect them from exploitation by either parents or employers. Teachers have reported the serious effects which employment out of school hours produces in many school children, and, generally, these may be said to vitiate mental and physical capacity. In November, 1914, I set on foot an enquiry in the Manchester Elementary Schools in order to ascertain the extent and character of the employment of school children. The result of this enquiry confirmed my already strong opinion that if such employment be permitted at all it should be permitted only under the closest supervision of the local education authority.

The following particulars give some indication of the result of the enquiry. It is important to bear in mind in considering these figures that Manchester had not at that time made any proposals for the establishment of any byelaws regulating the employment of school children.

## (1) AGES OF CHILDREN EMPLOYED.

Age.	Children employed.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
7 years - - - - -	10	24	34
8 " - - - - -	52	70	122
9 " - - - - -	166	116	282
10 " - - - - -	410	208	618
11 " - - - - -	753	319	1,072
12 " - - - - -	1,533	446	1,979
13 " - - - - -	1,580	394	1,974
	4,504	1,577	6,081

## (2) TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT.

These children were occupied in delivering milk and papers, or in running errands for shops; were employed in barbers' shops and in coal yards, in places of amusement, in domestic service, &c.

## (3) NUMBER OF HOURS AT WORK.

—	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Under 20 hours per week - - -	2,375	1,382	3,757
Between 20 and 30 hours per week -	1,378	112	1,490
" 30 " 40 " " " -	640	50	690
" 40 " 50 " " " -	112	15	127
	4,519	1,562	6,081

It must be borne in mind that these hours of work are in addition to the time spent in school.

(4) The *wages* of these children varied from 1s. to 5s. per week.

(5) The following statistics are significant of the hardship imposed upon many of these young children:—

(a) 2,128 children (1,911 boys, 217 girls) worked every morning, and 385 of these for two hours at least.

(b) 1,829 children (1,370 boys, 49 girls) worked throughout the dinner hour.

(c) 64 children (17 of them under 12 years of age) worked a minimum of 20 hours in the evenings (Mondays to Fridays).



- (d) 432 children (97 under 12 years of age) worked from three to four hours every school evening.
- (e) 5,540 children worked on Saturdays, and more than 1,000 of these worked for 10 hours or more on that day.
- (f) 1,851 children (including 223 girls) were employed on Sundays; 550 of these children were under 12 years of age. 645 delivered papers, 563 milk, 218 were lather boys, and 129 were engaged in domestic service. The hours of work varied from 1 to 10.

(6) *Examples :—*

Boy, 11 years of age. Greengrocer's boy. Works 44 hours weekly. On each school day (Monday to Friday) puts in one hour before morning school,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours between morning and afternoon school, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours each evening. 14 hours on Saturday.

Boy, 13 years of age. Newspapers.  $44\frac{1}{2}$  hours per week. On school days works  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours before 9 o'clock, 1 hour each mid-day, 3 hours each evening. 7 hours on Saturday, 5 hours on Sunday. Gets up at 5.15 a.m.

Boy, 11 years of age. Lather boy. 43 hours per week. On school days 1 hour before 9 o'clock,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours at mid-day, 3 hours each evening. 12 hours on Saturday, 4 on Sunday.

Boy, 11 years of age. Milk boy. 48 hours per week. On school days 3 hours before morning school, 1 hour at mid-day, 2 hours each evening. Saturdays, 12 hours, Sundays, 6 hours. Sleeps at employer's.

Boy, 9 years of age. Greengrocer's boy.  $36\frac{3}{4}$  hours per week. On school days  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour before morning school, 1 hour at mid-day,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours each evening. Saturdays,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

This report can leave no doubt as to the evil effects which may arise from the unrestricted employment of school children out of school hours. The evil concerns *school* children, and yet, the legislation set up to deal with it is *permissive* in character, and administered *never by the Board of Education centrally, not always by the Education Committee locally*.

#### VIII.—FAILURE OF THE PERMISSIVE PRINCIPLE IN JUVENILE LEGISLATION.

This practice of optional legislation concerning juveniles is quite common. The local authority *may* feed necessitous children, *may* set up byelaws allowing to children between 11 and 14 years of age exemption from attendance at the elementary school, *may* establish evening play centres. It is true that a legislative option in a Bill may be accepted, when a compulsory clause would be refused. It is also true that the option sometimes, after more or less experience, becomes

compulsion. I feel, however, that, in many of these matters, it would be far better to institute compulsion from the outset. An outstanding example of a permissive Act, and one which concerns this Conference more nearly than any other, is the Education (Choice of Employment) Act, 1910. As the Conference is aware, this Act confers upon local education authorities permissive powers to give information, advice, and assistance concerning employment to juveniles between the ages of 14 and 17. Under any conditions such work could be made of the utmost importance in promoting the welfare of children generally, but, under present conditions, and under the conditions which will probably obtain at the conclusion of the war, the value of such work would be incalculable. And yet, owing partly to its permissive character, less than 25 per cent. of the local authorities have adopted the Act and undertaken this important work. Such reluctance on the part of the local authorities may have been due partly also to the inadequate financial provision offered by the Board of Education, but, in my opinion, this work is the necessary complement of the purely educational work of local authorities.

The matter is further complicated by the setting-up, during the last eight years, of about 50 juvenile advisory committees administered by the Board of Trade.

#### IX.—JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES.

In view of the special objects of the Conference it is necessary that some detailed mention should be made of employment schemes generally, and the Education (Choice of Employment) Act in particular. Experience goes to prove that, even under present conditions, a scheme for giving assistance and advice to juveniles about to enter employment provides—

- (a) A fuller completion of the general education of the child;
- (b) A more suitable and proper use of juvenile labour;
- (c) A much greater prospect, through the organisation of care committees, of providing helpful supervision and advice during the critical years of early adolescence.

In my opinion it is clear that such employment schemes can be carried out with far better results when administered by a body which forms an integral part of the Education Committee than when administered by juvenile advisory committees. The scheme should be prepared and administered by the Education Committee, and approved by the Board of Education without any possibility of interference from the Board of Trade. There could be, and ought to be, co-operation with the labour exchanges locally, and with the Board of Trade centrally, but without any executive or independent authority attaching to these non-educational bodies.

## X.—JUVENILE ADVISORY COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.

At the present time it is competent for the Board of Trade to set up a juvenile advisory committee to deal with the employment of adolescents between 14 and 17 years of age.

In view of the closer connection which it will be necessary to establish in future between education committees and employers, it is undesirable that such direct contact should be broken by the interposition of such a body as a juvenile advisory committee of the Board of Trade.

Juvenile advisory committees form no part of local government, nor are they subject in any way to local municipal control.

They are committees appointed by a central government department—the Board of Trade—planted in local areas without any executive connection whatever with the local municipal authority, or with municipal government generally. They are appointed, financed, supervised by the Board of Trade, and worked by Board of Trade officers under instructions applicable, in the main, to adult labour exchanges. The children from the elementary schools who would, at 14 years of age, come into contact with a Board of Trade juvenile advisory committee for the *first* time, have already had close connection with an education committee for 9 years, and will, under a system of part-time day continuation classes, remain, in the matter of *education*, in the same close connection with, and under the supervision of, an education committee throughout the whole period during which the Board of Trade Committee would deal with them in the matter of *employment*.

Even if it were merely a matter of filling a vacancy, which it is not, it is questionable whether a juvenile advisory committee could perform this function as well as a local education committee. But it will be generally agreed that the most important function is the giving of advice and assistance with regard to the right type of employment.

Juvenile advisory committee officials appear to have no responsibility in the giving of advice and assistance. Special Rule 5 under the Labour Exchanges Act states :—

Subject to these rules a special advisory committee may take steps, either by themselves or in co-operation with any other bodies or persons, to give information, advice and assistance to boys and girls and their parents with respect to the choice of employment and other matters bearing thereon. Provided that the Board of Trade and the officer in charge of the labour exchange shall undertake no responsibility with regard to any advice or assistance so given.

A juvenile advisory committee is a body appointed by a *central* authority to exercise certain functions within a *local* area. It is not answerable to the local authority nor, in view of



the last sentence of Rule 5 quoted above, will the Board of Trade accept any responsibility for the committee's work in the matter of giving advice and assistance to boys and girls. Under any circumstances, it would not be possible for the officers of the juvenile advisory committee to give the most effective assistance and advice without information which can be obtained only from or through the Education Committee. The juvenile advisory committee has no claim on such information, nor has it the right of access to the schools.

Although the juvenile advisory committee acts within a defined area for local government, the local authority for that area has no power to appoint any of its members on the committee. In practice, the Board of Trade usually invite the local education authority to nominate certain of its members to sit on the juvenile advisory committee, but the Board of Trade are not under any obligation to do so.

As a rule either the labour exchange manager or an officer subordinate to the manager acts as the secretary to the juvenile advisory committee. By the nature of their appointments they are liable to be transferred from place to place, and they have no "security of tenure" in any given area. It does occur that, for various reasons, officers are moved about to meet the exigencies of the service, and when such officers are officers in charge of juveniles the policy has a distinctly bad influence on the work of their respective juvenile advisory committees. In such cases the committee has no power to intervene, as the officer is not the officer of the committee, but of the Board of Trade. Juvenile advisory committee officers are isolated from their own superior officers, both as regards the divisional office and the central office; and, since the divisional officer cannot be in attendance at the local exchange for more than a mere fraction of his time, this depreciates his value as an executive and consultative official.

When points of policy arise which have to be determined by either the divisional or the central office, it necessarily follows that purely local matters are settled by an officer who has little or no first hand knowledge of the conditions prevailing.

It is true that, in the areas where juvenile advisory committees now operate, the local education authority has had power, and still possesses such power, to set up employment schemes under the Choice of Employment Act. These local education authorities have failed to exercise their powers, with the result that juvenile advisory committees are, bearing in mind their limited possibilities, doing some excellent work in those areas. But I am urging the need for a general and comprehensive scheme offering for the whole country the greatest possibilities of achieving the maximum good. To this end juvenile advisory committees do not, in my opinion, offer the most effective means.



# XI.—JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEES AS PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY.

The parent committee of the juvenile employment committee is the local education committee, which is at all times easily accessible to its sub-committees. On the other hand, the parent committee of the juvenile advisory committee is the Board of Trade, which as a central government department is much more difficult of access. From the age of five years almost the entire child population of a local area is largely placed in the care of the Education Committee. In fact, the Education Committee is specially endowed with the power of:—

- (1) Providing schools.
- (2) Compelling attendance at such schools.
- (3) Feeding necessitous children.
- (4) Examining and treating children medically.
- (5) Cleansing children (if necessary).
- (6) Providing for the proper care (safe keeping) of children.
- (7) Assuming responsibility for the disposal of certain children whose parents are incapable of exercising proper control.

The Education Committee has in its possession a complete record—academic, medical, and personal—of each child, and is thus pre-eminently fitted to offer advice on suitable employment.

It is desirable, even under present conditions, that an employment committee should receive information concerning *all children finally leaving the elementary school*. Under a scheme of day continuation classes this would become a necessity. If the employment committee were part of the machinery of the Education Committee, such information would be much more likely to be supplied, and more expeditiously and effectively supplied, than if the employment committee formed no part of the local administrative machinery.

An employment committee without care committees cannot complete the work it sets on foot. The school, its organisation and teaching staff, whilst forming the essentials of successful after-care work, are not completely available except to the Education Committee and its administrative staff.

The question of employment of the adolescent is very closely connected with the question of his continued education and training. The Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to employment after the War, made a recommendation that it be an obligation on all young persons between 14 and 18 years of age to attend day continuation classes. Whilst I strongly support this recommendation, I feel that it is neither logical nor reasonable to make a recommendation for compulsion in education and to leave an option in the matter of giving information, advice, and assistance regarding employment. If

the interests of the children alone are to be considered, there are really only two points to be decided :—

- (a) Which authority is the most suitable and the best fitted to give information, advice, and assistance to adolescents in the matter of employment ?
- (b) Should it be optional or compulsory upon the selected authority to carry out such duty ?

The local education authority is obviously the best authority, and compulsion is the only method which will deal with the situation adequately.

It was never intended that juvenile advisory committees should be more than temporary agencies, and it was clearly anticipated that eventually the duty of giving information, advice, and assistance to juveniles in respect of employment should become a duty of the local education authority as the authority best fitted to carry out the work effectively.

All these matters concerning juvenile employment up to the age of 18 years should be dealt with by one local authority—the Local Education Authority—and one central authority—the Board of Education ; and further, it should be compulsory upon the Local Education Authority to make the necessary arrangements either through the medium of the Employment of Children Act, 1903, or the Education (Choice of Employment) Act, 1910, or otherwise.

It may be useful to quote the opinion of the Association of Education Committees of England and Wales. Such opinion is based upon information supplied by Education Committees themselves.

“Referring to the supervision of boys and girls up to the age of 18, the Association consider that this is a matter of the greatest urgency and importance. The Association think that the system of Juvenile Employment Bureaux and Local Committees in connection therewith, should be at once greatly strengthened and extended.

“The organisation of an Education Committee which has no such sub-committee or bureaux attached to it is seriously incomplete. If such Committee should let the children pass out of their knowledge and control at the age of 14, they are losing the advantage of all the information and experience of those children obtained by their teachers during their nine years of school life. They are also depriving the parents of the special facilities such a Committee has for obtaining independent expert advice and information as to the conditions and prospects of employments, and as to the actual vacancies available.

“The Association hold strongly that the administration of such Bureaux should be in the hands of Education Committees. The co-operation of the Labour Exchanges should be welcomed, but it was not the intention when

such Exchanges were established that they should concern themselves with the work of placing out in life young persons of 15 and 16, and they have not, and cannot have, the necessary knowledge and machinery for doing so. The power that will certainly soon be entrusted to local authorities to control in some form the continued education of such young persons, can only be properly exercised if the same authority is in close touch with the conditions of their daily employment.

“Where Juvenile Employment Bureaux have already been successfully established by Education Committees it has been found that they are able not only to place the children in suitable and beneficial employments, but also to keep in touch with them afterwards, to guide them as to their future education, to help them in difficulties, and in general to exercise a very salutary influence over them up to the age of 17 or 18. The Association considers that the value of such work both to the individual and the community is great and increasing. It is work which many education committees are already doing and which all ought to do.”

## XII.—RECONSTRUCTION.

I have endeavoured to indicate some of the difficulties arising from the multiplicity of authorities dealing with juveniles and from the optional character of much of the legislation for juveniles. The work of the local authority is often considerably hampered because much of this legislation suffers also from the fact that it is directed towards some narrow phase or period of child life without any reference to childhood as a whole. Departmental interests appear to have had no little effect in preventing legislation from being based upon a wide and comprehensive view of child welfare. The present appears to be an excellent time for reviewing and codifying legislation which is already on the Statute Book in respect of children, and the fact that future legislation is pending makes it all the more necessary that the new legislation shall take the wider view and shall include in its provisions some method of dealing with certain unsatisfactory features of the law at present in existence. Child life from the age of 5 to 14 is fairly definitely covered as regards legislation, except that, as stated previously, there are too many authorities and too much legislation of an optional character. It is almost certain that the impending legislation on education must deal with the period of child life immediately before five years of age and with the period of early adolescence immediately subsequent to 14 years of age. There appears to be a reasonable prospect that the public is prepared not only to extend its view of the proper educational age-period, but also to humanise its outlook as to what education should comprise. The need for dealing



comprehensively with the whole period from 3 to 18 years of age is urgent, and the opportunity was never greater than at the present time. Between these ages, education in its widest and most liberal sense should never cease; employment should be postponed and limited and, when no longer avoidable, regarded from the educational point of view in respect of its probable effects upon the physical, moral and mental development of the child. Neither education nor employment should any longer be in any sense arranged or adjusted for the benefit of the parent or of the employer. The present welfare of the child and his future possibilities as a citizen should be the deciding factors. Physique and character in the future man are more than premature income for the present child. A long step towards this desirable end will be taken if there is, in both the central and local areas, a body which has exclusive responsibility for the guardianship of child welfare throughout the period from 3 to 18 years of age. This work, which is vital to the interests of the nation, should be definitely committed to the Board of Education as the Central Authority and to the Education Committees in the local areas. Authorities already deal, or have power to deal, with a large proportion of the nation's children, with the greater portion of the age-period named, and with most of those activities which go to make the complete education of the child. These partial services as to number of children, period of time, and character of education should be made complete by taking any powers for the care and conduct of children, both centrally and locally, out of the hands of those Authorities whose work in connection with workhouses, prisons, Courts of Justice, shops and factories, bring children within their control. There can be the possibility of full and free development of the moral, physical and mental capacities of children only when, throughout the whole period, complete responsibility is placed upon the Central and Local *Education* Authorities.

### XIII.—SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION.

I have traced in outline the extensive, and even stultifying overlapping of departments which obtains both centrally and locally respecting the administrative and executive government of juveniles. I have urged that the complete education of children and adolescents must not be impeded by questions of administrative expediency or of departmental policy, but must be determined by, and brought to fruition by, that single instrument of government best fitted to develop individual capacity, independence, and character.

The basic principles it is necessary to establish are :—

- (a) unification of authority ;
- (b) extension of the period of child life to be placed under the supervision of such authority ;
- (c) less permissive powers and more compulsory powers.



I, therefore, submit to the consideration of the Conference the following suggestions :—

- (1) That there should be one central authority (the Board of Education) and one local authority (the local education authority) for all matters relating specifically to the general education and training of juveniles from 3 to 18 years of age.
- (2) That the powers of educational control and supervision now possessed by the Home Office, the Local Government Board, the Board of Trade, in respect of such juveniles, should be transferred to the Board of Education.
- (3) That the transference of educational powers from certain Government Departments to the Board of Education should be followed in the local areas by a similar transference of control and supervision to the local education authorities.
- (4) That the adoption of the Education (Choice of Employment) Act, 1910, should be made compulsory upon all Local Education Authorities.
- (5) That the Juvenile Advisory Committees, at present in operation, should be abolished or merged into Choice of Employment Schemes.
- (6) That Choice of Employment Committees should, as a part of their duties, be required to formulate and carry into effect schemes for after-care.
- (7) That any new legislation set up to deal with Day Continuation Schools should be compulsory in character, and subject to the administration of the Board of Education and the Local Education Authority.
- (8) That some development of Evening Play Centres is desirable on behalf of children who have left the Elementary School, that such development should be on the lines of clubs, and that such facilities will be especially needed upon the introduction of any scheme of part-time Compulsory Day Continuation Classes.
- (9) That legislation should be introduced, making it illegal to employ children systematically for wages before 14 years of age; or, in the alternative, that the adoption of sections 1 and 2 of the Employment of Children Act, 1903, should be made compulsory upon all Local Education Authorities.

## UNDESIRABLE EMPLOYMENTS.

*By H. NORWOOD, Organising and Juvenile Employment Officer  
to the Birmingham Central Care Committee.*

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### 1.—GENERAL STATEMENT.

The wider and deeper one's knowledge of trades and occupations becomes, and the more experienced one is in placing boys and girls in situations, the less one is inclined to make sweeping condemnation of particular employments or unqualified approval of others. Many of those engaged in placing children in situations no doubt began their work with the idea more or less definitely formed that employments could be fairly easily divided between desirable and undesirable, and that on no account ought they to place boys and girls in many of the latter, but on the other hand all or nearly all ought to be placed in the former. Probably such Officers soon found that there were some of the boys and girls with whom they had to deal who were "undesirable" from the point of view of the satisfactory employment, and that the problem of suitable placing was a very complex one.

Broadly, the idea was that in the world of manual work the skilled trades such as toolmaking, turning, fitting, &c. in the engineering shops, and bricklaying, carpentry, and joinery, &c. in the building trade were desirable, and the machine minding, labouring, &c. the undesirable. The skilled trades were more progressively educative, afforded better training in character, were more self-respecting and assured more regular work and a better living wage to the boys and girls later on. The idea was of course quite well-founded, and this general view of skilled and so-called unskilled employment was quite justified. Juvenile Employment Officers, while successful in many cases, found that there were numbers of boys and girls, generally backed by their parents, who would pay no heed to their most pressing advice about ultimate advantages, but insisted on the job with the big wage to begin. Even some of those who did heed were found to be too fickle, either by temperament or through lack of home discipline or encouragement for the steady application necessary to "learn a trade."

Then the skilled trades were not without pitfalls. Names of "trades" had not the same significance with all firms. The "trades" were so divided up in some works that the part to which a learner was confined was not sufficient in scope to warrant his giving his word to remain for the required number of years. Also the workshop traditions and conditions were poor with some firms as compared with others. On the other hand, some firms whose work was to a considerable degree

unskilled were wise enough to minimise the disadvantage of their more or less routine work by bright, clean and healthy conditions in their factories, and by providing facilities for physical training and continued general education. Hence it was necessary to know intimately the individual firms as well as the separate trades.

What I have said could be indefinitely amplified, but it will serve to show that I am not prepared to draw a hard and fast line between desirable and undesirable employments, nor to attempt to set out a "black list" of undesirable employments. The objection to an employment generally arises from one or more of certain adverse features, and it will probably serve the purpose of the present paper if the most common of these are dealt with.

## 2.—REPETITION WORK.

The worst feature of present day juvenile employment is that such a vast amount of it involves no graduated training over a reasonable period of time. In most large industries there are highly skilled trades, but the bulk of the work is more or less mechanical, and such that boys and girls being at a very adaptable age on leaving school can readily acquire the modicum of skill or learn the few tricks necessary to earn a considerable wage. So readily efficient for their small part, they can be as readily replaced, and so they acquire no special value to the firms they temporarily serve. The work supplies them with practically no stimulus or help in mental or moral development, in fact most of it is so limited in scope and monotonous in operation that it stunts growth. So much has been said and written on this class of work in recent years that it would appear superfluous to say more. But it is only by constant warning and reiterated emphasis that parents placing their children out can be educated to the facts and that remedies and reorganisation can be expected. One who has had intimate experience of the difficulties of finding a fresh channel for the constant stream of boys and girls from 16 to 18 years of age, they having reached the end of their cheapness to employers at merely mechanical processes, may be pardoned for dwelling upon it a little. There is no more acute problem and no more discouraging experience to the Juvenile Employment Officer than this.

Take the engineering trades, for instance. Engineering, mechanical and electrical, has long been a very popular trade with boys in Birmingham and doubtless in other centres. The term now covers much more than it did not many years ago. So far as the several skilled trades within it are concerned, well and good, though these are severely subdivided now in the larger works; but most large engineering firms manufacture machine parts in vast numbers, and great installations of automatic machines are usual. The boys who work the simpler machines on entering the works at 14 years of age will tell you

that they are learning engineering; but they find themselves cast off, many of them, in a year or two very ill-equipped for earning their living. The majority of them become casual labourers in various industries.

The brass trade is another large local industry. It includes half-a dozen or more fairly well defined and distinct skilled trades (modelling, patternmaking, chasing, polishing, spinning, &c.). But only a comparatively small proportion of the boys who enter the industry become skilled men. There is here again a great deal of repetition process work, necessitated by turning out quantities of the same article. The instability of boy labour in this part of the trade is very pronounced. The boys pass from one works to another with the greatest unconcern, generally for higher wages, until they reach the limit of their economic value, then many of them find themselves adrift. There is this undesirable side to most of the metal trades, the cycle industry, the motor industry, the cheap jewellery manufacture, and, indeed, to practically all manufacture on the multiple scale. Those familiar with the textile industries tell of its effects there.

### 3.—POSSIBLE AMELIORATION.

The question arises, Is there any prospect of relief? The experience of the war on the industrial side has but emphasised the importance of production and the possible effect of increased output on cost and on the volume of employment. It seems certain that manufacture by machinery will receive a permanent impetus and that process work for boys and girls could not be eliminated. There may, however, be ways and means of making the work less objectionable. The Trades Unions will no doubt have a voice in the future standing of such work, and it will probably employ adults much more freely than in the past, so that a higher proportion of the boys and girls who take it up may be able to continue in it. Also, it will probably be found that by improved systems of training young work-people can become experienced on a greater variety of machines, graded in difficulty. Possibly, too, they may be taught to set their own tools on the simpler machines, adding some variety and greater interest to the work.

These possibilities are put forward with the greater confidence owing to steps which were taken locally in the brass trade immediately before the war. Employers discovered that they were faced with a shortage of highly-skilled men in the trade, notwithstanding that they took into their works more boys than could possibly be absorbed as men, either skilled or unskilled. They suffered, too, from the continual changing of jobs by a great many of the boys. Representatives of the employers and of the workmen, together with the Chairman and Officers in charge of the City Choice of Employment Scheme,



held several conferences and agreed to prepare improved schemes of training, one feature of which was to be attendance in the employers' time at a Brass Trade School. Though the scheme was suspended, sufficient was done to show that employers and workmen realised the pressing need for improvement and reorganisation.

But if there is some prospect of the objection to this class of work as an avenue to adult unemployment or low wages being removed, or at least much mitigated, there remains the equally strong objection that it is bad from the educational standpoint. It is most important, therefore, that, in any scheme of educational reform, provision be made for young workpeople of this kind. They have made very little use of the evening schools in the past, partly because they have worked so late in the evening, but largely because they could see no advantage to themselves in the education offered. Day trade classes and schools for apprentices and learners in the skilled trades will probably be welcomed in the new era, but there will be considerable scepticism on the part of employers and employees as to the advantage of school courses for those in the low-skilled or unskilled occupations. From civic and domestic considerations, and also from reaction on industrial efficiency, further education after leaving elementary schools is urgently called for. Fortunately Messrs. Cadbury Bros. have demonstrated the practicability in their own factory of releasing their young workpeople during part of the worktime for educational purposes. The firm, as is probably well known, not only conduct special classes for their skilled trades, but send their ordinary young employees on one or two half-days each week to schools, which are conducted by the City Education Committee, where the education is of a physical and general character. The boys and girls benefit considerably in physique, they are fresher in mind and are appreciably quicker and more adaptable at their factory work as a result. When the provision of schools is general and attendance compulsory we may look to see at least some of the deadening influence of routine work counteracted.

#### 4.—GIRLS IN THE METAL TRADES.

It is not to be understood that what I have said about the unsatisfactory branches of work in the metal and other industries already mentioned applies only to boys. For years past numbers of women and girls have been employed in the lighter manufactures from metal (pens, small brass goods, &c.), and "press work" particularly claims a large number of girls every year. The same objections as in the case of boys apply to girls taking up low-skilled employment, except that many women give up work on being married, and consequently a smaller proportion of girls are turned off. (Of course latterly, under war stress, women and girls have been engaged not only

in greater numbers but on heavier work—in engineering shops, for instance.)

#### 5.—WAREHOUSE WORK, &C.

There are, as we all know, numbers of other employments, besides the low-skilled occupations in the industries already mentioned, which would be classed as more or less undesirable under the test of graduated training and gradual development; and every Juvenile Employment Officer will recognise these for his own locality. Many kinds of warehouse work would fail to pass the test, notwithstanding that the sorting, wrapping, and packing of small manufactured articles, of tea, of food powders and products, and much other similar work is very popular with girls. The work in sweets and chocolate factories is mostly not skilled, but again is much sought after. The preference of girls for this kind of work over the more highly skilled trades is to be regretted perhaps, but one cannot but sympathise in a measure with their desire for the clean and light employment in pleasant rooms and well-ordered factories, though admittedly many warehouses would not justify this description. It may imply a false sense of the “respectable,” but it also shows some sense of refined feeling.

#### 6.—ERRAND AND VAN BOYS.

Employment as errand boys and van boys has been almost universally condemned. It has been the theme of numerous writers and speakers on juvenile employment, not only as well illustrating the evils of “blind alley” work, but on account of other serious drawbacks—irregular hours, fitful application, lack of discipline, and often, in the case of van boys, bad environment. My purpose in mentioning them is to refer to the possibilities of Juvenile Employment Committees. When the Choice of Employment Scheme had been fairly started in Birmingham, a very active propaganda was carried on by means of parents’ meetings, Press articles, advice given in school, &c. The Committee made a dead set against no particular occupation, but rather dwelt upon the tests of good employment, and had addresses given on the desirable trades. In about two years complaints became very frequent from would-be employers that the casual errand boy could not be got, and they attributed their difficulties to the Care Committees. The transport and carrying companies also found the supply of van boys failing. An official from the goods department of one of the principal railway companies came to see me on the subject, and informed me of a number of improvements the company had made in the interests of their boys. Boys who rendered satisfactory service were not to be dismissed, but would be absorbed in one of the branches of the service, suitable mess and other accommodation had been provided, good clothing to protect against inclement weather was

issued, boys were under efficient supervision, and so on. He stated that the work at the goods depôt was seriously hampered for want of boys, of whom they were short by more than 200. Even the high wages offered failed to attract a sufficient supply. The more general use of the large motor lorry, employing two adults, may lessen the number of boys employed in the future, but so far as boys continue to be employed it should certainly be possible for the larger companies to follow the example of the Post Office in the case of their messengers, and to reorganise so as to absorb the van boys. This is the more desirable, because Juvenile Employment Officers have frequently to place children who are positively advised out-door employment on medical grounds, and there are so few out-door jobs in the large cities.

As for the errands, where a lad of the right stamp has made up his mind to follow a particular business there is no great harm in his beginning at the bottom. In many businesses, too, the chances of a lad beginning on errands will, I am informed, be better than in the past, owing to the expected shortage of adults. But no experienced member or officer of a Juvenile Employment Committee is likely to be misled by the specious plea of those who are always ready to tell of the successful men who began as errand boys. Most boys of grit, character, and enterprise can be expected to come out all right, whatever the start and in spite of conditions, but we know too well the effect on the ordinary boy of this kind of work in the past.

#### 7.—DIRTY TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS.

Another test which has constantly to be applied in practice is that of cleanliness or dirtiness of an employment. Naturally there are in the heavy trades of Birmingham a fair number of jobs which are dirty or wet, or both. "Dogging up" in the tube trade is an extreme illustration. There is no escape from the dirt and grease for the boys so engaged. (This particular job is unsatisfactory from all points of view, and it is to be hoped that the general use of machinery will soon dispense with the dogger up.) The foundry work is the least popular of the skilled trades in the engineering shop, and brass casting in the brass works, mainly because these are more dirty than other trades in those industries. The demand among girls for warehouse and other clean work in preference to certain skilled trades has already been mentioned. Where there is a wide choice of employment there is always a tendency for the rougher and less self-respecting boys and girls to gravitate to the more dirty occupations. The conditions even in the dirty trades vary very much in different factories, showing that a good deal more might be than is at present done to make certain classes of work, which are otherwise desirable, more attractive to the better boys and girls. The wearing of overalls



where advisable, the provision of sufficient washing convenience, and other measures can make a very great difference. Juvenile Employment Committees and Officers will find that they have many opportunities of promoting improvements. The Officers are often invited by employers to go round factories and workshops which are suffering from a shortage of boys and girls, and see the conditions for themselves, or if an Officer wishes to visit a particular works the manager, or someone deputed by him, is nearly always prepared to show him round. Suggestions for getting rid of conditions which help to keep boys and girls away from the place or cause them to leave are nearly always welcomed, and in many cases adopted. Every opportunity should be taken of promoting cleanly conditions, seeing that placing is often hampered by their absence.

### 8.—HEALTH CONDITIONS.

Then considerations of health must naturally be taken into account. Thanks to the Home Office prohibition of and restrictions on the employment of young persons in certain dangerous trades, there are few positively unhealthy trades into which boys and girls can go. Still, some manufacturing processes are unquestionably less healthy than others, and carefully acquired knowledge on this matter is absolutely necessary to the Juvenile Employment Officer, as the mention of a particular process or industry as unhealthy will usually bring protests from employers and workpeople alike. Enormous advance has, however, been made of late years and is continually being made in eliminating unhealthy conditions from trades, so knowledge must be up-to-date. Great care must be taken as to placing children where there is any risk of lead poisoning, and there is still some risk in paint and colour works, in soft soldering, &c. French polishing supplies an instance of a dusty trade unsuitable to some chest conditions, though to the modern polishing shop, with efficient ventilation and arrangements for dust extraction, little exception can be taken for the average boy or girl. The use of naphtha in certain processes of rubber manufacture is at least temporarily deleterious. The fumes in the dipping and plating shops also are found objectionable by some persons. (Here again in good modern shops the objection is minimised.) The unhygienic conditions in many factories and workshops are the cause of more ill-health than are unhealthy processes. Poor ventilation, deficient lighting, and lack of cleanliness are not uncommon. The converted dwelling houses and other old premises often compare very unfavourably with the larger and more modern buildings. The wide variation in health conditions further emphasizes the importance of the Juvenile Employment Officer being in a position to give to boys and girls information and guidance respecting individual firms in any industry. The satisfactory placing of children from the



point of view of health would be more assured if the School Medical Service and the Factory Medical Inspection Service were unified or at least co-ordinated.

#### 9.—HEAVY WORK.

There are some occupations which to the observer appear too hard for the boys and girls following them. The lifting and carrying of considerable weights, and the working of some of the presses, for instance, would seem too heavy to allow of healthy and natural development. This is especially so at the present exceptional time, though one must admit that the boys and girls are standing the strenuous work better than one would have expected. It is to be hoped that ill effects will not appear later in life. The Home Office limitation of weights to be carried according to the age of the young workpeople in the china and earthenware industry in the Potteries is an experiment to be watched with interest, and one which it may be advisable to extend to some other industries later.

#### 10.—SEASONAL TRADES.

The seasonal character of some employments has to be borne in mind in giving industrial advice. The building trades, including house painting and decorating, are a widely known example. The jewellery industry has its slack time from Christmas to Easter. Seasonal trades generally have an exceptionally busy period of the year, as well as a slack one, when, by working overtime, the drawback from the money standpoint can be lessened.

#### 11.—OVERCROWDED EMPLOYMENTS.

Any occupation which is generally overcrowded is for that reason undesirable, except for boys and girls who have clearly special aptitude and qualifications which indicate probable success. The applications, by girls particularly, for office work give point to this observation. Many more than at ordinary times can be expected to earn a decent living wage in offices press for this class of employment, and a good number of them are of no more than moderate ability and attainment. These would generally do better in one or other of the lighter skilled trades and should be advised accordingly.

#### 12.—MISCELLANEOUS UNDESIRABLE EMPLOYMENTS

There are a number of smaller employments which are almost by common consent regarded as having none of the good features of juvenile employment but many demoralising elements. It is unnecessary to do more than mention instances

—door boys, golf caddies, and the occupations which are in many places by local byelaws under the Employment of Children Act, 1903, prohibited to boys and girls of school age (in connection with the sale of alcoholic liquors; lathering or similar employment in a barber's shop; employment in theatres, picture houses, music halls, and other indoor places of amusement; in billiard or bagatelle saloons; in the kitchens of hotels, cook-shops, and eating houses). Employment which is recognised as so bad for children under 14 as to be prohibited, cannot be good for children on reaching 14, and the greatest care needs to be exercised with regard to them.

### 13.—MORAL CONDITIONS.

On the large question of moral tone, it is known how widely factories, workshops, and even industries differ from each other. It has been established that where an employer or manager gives personal attention to the moral atmosphere and is determined to keep it clean, he generally succeeds to a surprising degree. It is of the first importance that Juvenile Employment Committees should have the fullest and most reliable knowledge possible on this matter as affecting different workshops, factories, and offices, and should lose no opportunity of helping to keep conditions right where they are good or to improve them where they are bad.

### 14.—LOCAL STUDY AND INFORMATION NECESSARY.

No attempt to be exhaustive in such a paper as this on so large a subject as undesirable employments could be successful, therefore I have not endeavoured to supply a complete guide. Although the trades and industries in Birmingham are wonderfully diverse and supply much data for a general treatise, there are some industries unrepresented here, or practically so, which are the primary concern of other districts. Then the conditions and customs in similar trades vary in different places, and only local study can profitably fill in gaps and adjust conclusions. I will content myself with a brief reference to two other considerations which have an important general bearing upon the subject.

### 15.—KNOWLEDGE OF INDIVIDUAL BOYS AND GIRLS ESSENTIAL.

After all that has been written and said on the subject of desirable and undesirable employments, it has to be remembered that we have to deal with very human boys and girls, with all their likes and dislikes, their varied conditions of physical fitness, their mental and moral qualifications, and their numerous idiosyncrasies. It follows that no one can be quite successful in placing them in situations without a considerable

knowledge of boys and girls in general and without means of special knowledge of the particular boy or girl. Theories have sometimes to be set aside and departures made from the ideal when face to face with the individual and the possibilities. The work of the Juvenile Employment Officer has often been described as fitting square pegs into square holes, and round pegs into round holes. If there were only square holes and round holes and square pegs and round pegs, his task would be much simpler than it is. But there are holes of every shape and size, and some of them are very irregular. Some of the pegs, too, are very angular (and there are not a few just now which insist that they are too big for any of the holes that can be shown them). All this emphasizes the need for Juvenile Employment Committees, and doubly emphasizes the necessity for schemes being associated with those who have done their best to shape the peg and who, therefore, know something of it, viz., the Local Education Authority.

#### 16.—EDUCATION THROUGH WORK.

In closing this paper I should like to put in a plea for a fuller and more general recognition of the educational effects and possibilities of the boys' and girls' work. We are too apt to regard schooling as education and education as finishing with schooling, which, of course, is not the case. Properly considered, the boy on going to work changes the sphere and the means of his education. As already shown, some employments are much better than others from this point of view, but none is without effect. I hope that when the day part-time schools come, a determined effort will be made to secure the interest of the employers in the schools, and surely it is inconceivable that the School Authorities will be indifferent to what the pupils are doing in the works. The best cannot be done for the boys and girls unless there is close co-operation between the two, and co-ordination, so far as may be, between the education in the school and in the works. With a recognition of the bearing of the one on the other, and of both on the development of the powers of the boy, we may hope to see much improved and better planned schemes of training in the industries, whether apprenticeship in a modified form is revived or not, and we may further hope to see a saner regard for the physical, hygienic and moral conditions in the works.

## THE PERILS OF DEMOBILISATION.

*By R. A. BRAY, Chairman, London Juvenile Advisory Committee.*

In this paper I propose to deal with three questions. I have, in the first place, set out the effects of the War on juvenile employment. Secondly, I have outlined the problem and the perils of demobilisation. And, finally, I have endeavoured to show what part can be played by Juvenile Employment Committees in the work of assisting the boys and girls to pass with a minimum of danger through this period of stress and difficulty.

### I.—JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT AND THE WAR.

During the last three years a wave of change has passed over the industries of this country. Industry, adapted to a time of peace, has been transformed to meet the needs of a great war. There has been a change in the nature of the goods produced, a change in the methods of manufacture, and a change in the kinds of persons employed. Such changes cannot occur without exerting marked effects on the conditions of juvenile employment. Of these the following are the more important:—

(1) With industry mobilised for war there has been a great change in the distribution of occupations among juveniles. Boys in numbers far beyond the ordinary have entered engineering shops and are engaged in producing munitions. Girls are similarly employed, and are also replacing boys in office and messenger work, while they have largely forsaken the ordinary women's occupations such as dressmaking, millinery and domestic service. In certain districts inquiries have shown that more than a third of the boys and girls are abnormally employed, in the sense that they are engaged on work which, but for the War, they would not have been undertaking.

(2) There has, on the whole, been some decrease in the opportunities for training in the workshops. With all industry aiming at a maximum of output, and resorting to repetition work on a phenomenal scale, no other result could be expected. Boys and girls who would in ordinary times have entered an occupation with good prospects of learning a trade are taking up employment altogether uneducative. On the other hand, boys who would have become messengers and office youths are now engaged on work which, from the standpoint of education, is certainly not less, and possibly more, valuable than their normal employment.



(3) It will certainly be found that in the long run the health of the juvenile worker has suffered. Apart from the unsuitability of many of the new occupations, the long hours and the frequent night work of those engaged on munitions are a serious strain on the boy and the girl. The effect is to some extent marked by the better food which a larger family income enables them to obtain. But conditions, such as now exist, continued over a period not of days but of months, are leaving a mark which will later be revealed either in definite disease or in impaired physical vigour. Cases of actual breakdown are not uncommon, and the frequency with which juveniles leave the munition factories is in part due to their inability to stand the strain.

(4) The war has made life very difficult for the youthful workers, and their character has suffered. The lack of discipline in the new or enlarged factories; the absence of proper female supervision in the case of much work on which girls are replacing boys; the high wages earned; the large demand for juvenile labour rendering work too easy to drop and too easy to find; the tendency to discharge juveniles between contracts and so to produce spells of temporary unemployment; the absence of the father on military service; the weakening of the club and other social organisations; all these forces acting often together have made not for but against the moral well-being of the boy and the girl.

It must not be supposed that all these effects of war conditions are found uniformly throughout the country. Some, indeed, are general; but others are concentrated in districts where the numbers of national and controlled establishments are large.

## II.—THE PROBLEM OF DEMOBILISATION.

Demobilisation affects two classes of persons. On the one hand there is the industrial army, now organised on a war basis, which will require to be re-distributed in an industry fashioned for purposes of peace. On the other hand there are the military forces which will need to be reabsorbed in industry. These large changes, affecting millions of persons, cannot be carried through without grave dislocation to the labour market.

So far as juvenile workers are concerned, demobilisation will render necessary a change of occupation on a large scale. In certain districts a third or even more may be discharged and compelled to seek fresh employment. There must follow some temporary unemployment before they can again be reabsorbed in industry. This change of occupation, with consequential unemployment, will not be easily carried through or without great peril to the boys and girls affected. The following are among the dangers which must be recognised and met :—

(1) There will be the danger of juvenile unemployment on a large scale, with the demoralisation that necessarily accompanies such unemployment. As already mentioned, a change of employment necessarily entails temporary unemployment unless some provision is taken to prevent it.

(2) There will be a difficulty in boys who have been engaged on munitions obtaining employment. On the one hand employers, familiar as they are with the lack of training and the absence of discipline which distinguish such boys, will be reluctant to engage them. On the other hand the boys themselves, accustomed as they have been to high wages and to a practically unlimited demand for their services, will not readily accept employment at the lower rates of wages which must necessarily follow the termination of the war.

(3) There will be a danger of the boys and girls, if left without assistance, taking up work for which they are not best suited. On the one hand there will be the tendency in accentuated form to judge the value of a vacancy by the pecuniary advantages offered. On the other hand, in the case of those who may be experiencing the pinch of economic pressure, there will be the tendency to accept the first work that offers in order to start earning at the earliest possible moment. It must be remembered that in certain districts the need for replacement may affect a third of the juvenile population. Redistribution of occupation must therefore occur on a large scale. On the method in which this redistribution is carried out depends greatly the future well-being of the boys and girls affected. They will require advice and assistance in regard to employment, and the machinery for furnishing such help must be ready. The danger of unguided choice during demobilisation is serious.

(4) There is the danger to the children leaving school during the period of industrial dislocation following the war. The labour market will be disturbed; employers unable to foresee the future will be reluctant to engage learners and apprentices, while for occupations in connection with which they incur no responsibilities for training, they will prefer the school child to the boy or girl who has already been in employment. Under conditions of this kind it will not be easy to guide the child leaving school into suitable employment.

It is, however, unlikely that the problem will be merely one of redistribution of occupations in a labour market where the demand, though changed in kind, remains constant in amount. We must face the possibility of at least a temporary depression in trade and consequent unemployment. If the daily war expenditure be put at six millions a day, we may perhaps

assume that Government work in this country to the value of at least three millions daily is being carried out. It is not easy to see how new orders to that value can automatically appear at the right time to take the place of the war orders. It is necessary to remember that before orders can be placed, tenders must be asked for; that many months must elapse before an employer will have sufficient knowledge of the price of labour and materials to be able to tender. In the meantime he must dismiss a large part of his staff. Further, in the argument frequently advanced that trade will be busy after the war because so many people will want so many things that orders will come in too quickly to be attended to—in this argument there is a fallacy. It is the fallacy which confuses a desire for goods with a demand for goods in the economic sense; a demand rendered effective by purchasing power. That a temporary depression can, by proper organisation, be avoided we may well believe; that it will be prevented we may, perhaps, hope; but unless we follow the rash course of adapting our precautionary measures to the extreme limit of our wildest hopes, we must take account of the fact that there may be a depression, and prepare to meet it. The problem then of redistribution of occupations, which will certainly present itself, is complicated by the probability that the number of new occupations will be inadequate to secure complete redistribution; some persons must be left unemployed.

### III.—MEASURES TO MEET THE PERIL.

In this section I am confining myself to measures of preparation for meeting the peril which can be carried out by juvenile employment committees acting in co-operation with the education authorities and the employment exchanges. While it is clear that much can only be done by the Government, it is no less clear that much must remain to be carried out by committees dealing with the individual boys and girls displaced. It is with these purely practical measures which can be carried into effect without legislation that I am here concerned.

Further, while the proposals outlined below are intended to meet an emergency, they are for the most part adapted to secure objects desirable under normal conditions. If we may assume that juvenile employment committees should be encouraged and strengthened, the fact that the proposals about to be suggested lead towards this end supplies an additional reason for giving effect to them. Where the emergency arises, preparations will have been made to deal with it; where it does not arise the work of preparation will have done much to increase the efficiency of the organisation for dealing with questions of juvenile employment. It is not therefore necessary for an authority, before deciding on preparation, to consider whether



or not in their district boys and girls will be affected during the period of demobilisation. The preparation in either case will serve a useful purpose :—

(1) The first essential in all preparation lies in the task of securing in every district an active Juvenile Employment Committee. I am not going into the controversial question as to whether such a committee should be created under the Labour Exchange Act or under the Choice of Employment Act. The matter of real importance is not the precise type of organisation but the efficiency of the committee. Most of the existing committees have suffered during the war; they have lost many of their most valuable volunteers; they have been deprived, often for reasons of economy, of a part of their staff. Efforts must be made to make good the loss. It is no doubt true that volunteers are in these days hard to obtain, but the best means of attracting their service lie in the appeal to undertake work of importance. As regards staff the vacancies should be filled at once, if only that they may secure the necessary training before the emergency arises. In nearly half the country no juvenile employment committees exist; new committees must therefore be formed.

(2) The first duty of an active committee will be to enlist the services of a body of volunteers drawn from the chief social organisations in the district.

The work of these volunteers, sometimes called after-care visitors, lies in the task of keeping in touch with the boys and girls after they have been placed, assisting them in the many difficulties that attend the first stages in industry and reporting periodically on the progress of the child in his employment. No committee have any right to advise a child to apply for a vacancy with a particular employer unless they take steps to learn whether the conditions promised are in fact being carried out.

At the present moment and in connection with the problem of demobilisation, special duties devolve on these volunteers. Attention has already been directed to the difficulty that will be experienced in inducing juveniles, who have long been in receipt of large wages and trained to believe that the demand for their services is unlimited, to take and keep employment where earnings are small compared with those to which they have been accustomed. This difficulty will be overcome only by a long spell of unemployment, unless, before the period of dislocation begins, they have learned to expect and tolerate the changes which will follow the termination of the war. Their minds must be prepared in advance; they must be tuned to accord with the new conditions. This delicate task of preparation must devolve on the after-care visitors and the members and staff of Juvenile Employment Committees. Already in certain parts much attention has been given to the subject. The cards of all boys and girls placed in abnormal employment are



specially marked ; the after-care visitors, who are in touch with the juvenile and the home, are informed of the nature of the employment and are asked to lose no opportunity of impressing on child and parent its temporary character and to prepare the mind to accept change. Periodically, groups of such juveniles are summoned for interview, when the same note of warning is sounded. Two results are achieved. First, the lesson is taught—whether it is fully learned is more doubtful ; secondly, the confidence of parents and children is won. When in the time of stress the lesson must be applied, those who point the application will appear not as strangers but as trusted friends.

(3) Preparation for dealing with the problem of demobilisation requires the establishment of close relations between the Juvenile Employment Committees and the employers. Each Committee should, in co-operation with the Employment Exchange, organise systematic visiting of the employers of the district. Such visiting should aim at securing three objects :—

- (i) The views of each employer on the question of demobilisation as it may affect his factory should be ascertained ; the relation of the work now carried on to the work carried on prior to the war ; the number of boys or girls employed now as compared with the number employed during times of peace ; whether girls and women have replaced boys and men ; the opinion of the employer as to the immediate prospects of his business when the war orders terminate ; information on all these and other kindred matters should be collected from each of the more important employers of the district. Such information will enable the Committee to form some idea of the problem of demobilisation as it is likely to present itself in their area of work.
- (ii) An attempt should be made to secure promise of co-operation from employers during the period of dislocation. In particular endeavour should be made to secure on the one hand notice in advance of juveniles about to be discharged, and on the other hand, an undertaking, so far as possible, to use the Juvenile Employment Committees as the means of obtaining any additional juveniles required. Committees will then be in the favourable position of knowing in extent both the supply of and the demand for juvenile labour.
- (iii) The general question of the better supervision and training of the juvenile worker should be discussed with employers. The time is opportune for such discussion. Employers, as never before, are giving close attention to the subject. It has been found

possible to hold conferences of representatives of employers and employees with the view of regularising the method of entry and the training in various occupations.

(4) Relations should be established between Juvenile Employment Committees and the Welfare and Health Section of the Ministry of Munitions. This Department are closely concerned with the boys and girls engaged in munitions, that is, precisely with the class of young persons certain to be affected during demobilisation.

(a) Officers of the Department systematically visit national and controlled establishments, discuss with employers all matters affecting the welfare and health of the boys and girls, and where necessary the Department address recommendations to the firm. An intimate knowledge is so obtained of the industrial life of young persons.

(b) As a result of such visits a large number of employers have appointed persons known as welfare supervisors, whose duty lies in bringing into the factory the conditions which Juvenile Employment Committees are anxious to secure. These welfare supervisors, although not the officers of the Department, are closely associated with its activities.

(c) In certain districts the Department have appointed officers to organise welfare work outside the factory, and these officers have an intimate knowledge of the home conditions of young persons. While the work of these officers is not limited to young persons, it does specifically include them, and as such is directed to secure the same objects as the work of Juvenile Employment Committees. There can be no doubt that during the period of demobilisation, and in any measures taken to carry boys and girls through that time of peril, the officers of the Department will have important functions to perform. It is, therefore, essential that Juvenile Employment Committees should work in close touch with them and agree as to the part to be played by each organisation when the need arises.

(5) Demobilisation will affect not only the young persons now in employment, it will also be a source of danger to the children about to leave school. The period of dislocation will be a time of confusion and unrest in the industrial world. Satisfactory placing, in the uncertainties of trade, will be difficult and in most cases impossible.

Till things move to a stable settlement, those boys and girls, secure till now under the protection of the school, are best retained in that place of safety.

To secure this result every effort should be used to induce children, free to leave school, to continue in attendance.

Leaflets should be issued to teachers explaining the consequences following a dislocation of labour on a large scale, the difficulty of children obtaining suitable employment, and the uncertainty of obtaining employment at all. They should be asked to impress this fact on children likely to leave, and on their parents, and to urge attendance at school for at least another term. Juvenile Employment Committees and after-care visitors should drive home the same lesson. If a campaign on these lines, backed by teachers and other persons in whom children and parents have confidence, were carried on in the schools well in advance of the need and vigorously continued, there can be little doubt that no inconsiderable number of children would be induced to prolong their school life.

Incidentally the temporary holding up of a number of new entrants to the labour market would render easier the task of finding occupations for those who have already gone out to work.

(6) Juvenile Employment Committees must have ready prepared a definite scheme for dealing with the large numbers of boys and girls who will be displaced. Arrangements must be made to assist them to find the occupations best suited to their capacities. Few are committed to any particular trade, all are of an age when learning is still possible. Those displaced will be of the most varied intellectual attainments. Anyone familiar with the educational history of the boys engaged on munitions will know that while some have left school in the third or fourth standards, other have reached ex-seventh. Others again come from central schools and a few even from secondary. In the interests of the boys it is important that account should be taken of these differences. It is no less important to industry that the skilled trades, which after the War may be taking on learners, should be able to secure the boys or girls who are best suited to fill these positions. In default of any organisation providing the necessary advice and assistance, they will, under the threat of unemployment, tend to take the first job that offers; and redistribution will be little more than a matter of chance.

The Juvenile Employment Committees, in conjunction with the Employment Exchanges, supply the organisation for furnishing such advice and assistance. Further, there should be no difficulty, so far as regards the larger employers, in securing notice in advance of any considerable discharge of boys and girls, and so of being afforded the opportunity of visiting the works and registering the juveniles prior to discharge. As regards others, the Employment Exchanges are now so widely used that if thrown out of employment the great majority of juveniles will at once register.



There is, therefore, no difficulty in bringing the juveniles displaced into relation with an organisation capable of assisting them and giving the necessary advice. The difficulty lies in keeping them in contact with that organisation till suitable openings can be offered. In times of unemployment the children arrive before the vacancies, and in particular before the best vacancies. Experience further shows that if the juveniles call two or three times at the Exchange without obtaining employment the great majority will give up calling and disappear. What is wanted is some method of holding these boys and girls together, and keeping them in centres accessible to the Exchange till the vacancies begin to come in. These centres would serve as reservoirs of labour which could be gradually drawn on as suitable vacancies appeared. In this way redistribution could be effected in the best interests of juveniles and industry.

The need for the establishment of such centres is shown by approaching the problem of dislocation from another point of view. Unemployment, even for a brief period, is in the case of juveniles attended by serious results. Demoralisation rapidly sets in. This danger with juveniles who have already run somewhat wild during the war must be guarded against. If employment cannot be found, an alternative, in the shape of some sort of occupation, must be provided.

The provision of centres, where the juveniles can be usefully occupied, is the work of the Local Education Authority. On the other hand, the Education Authority, in the absence of any relation to the Employment Exchanges, have at their disposal no effective means of reaching the unemployed boys and girls. The mere establishment of classes, however well advertised, will not meet the need. Machinery is required to secure direct relations between the centres and the juveniles desiring occupation. The following scheme is offered as a suggestion :--

- (i) The Education Authority must have organised centres ready to open in case of need. At the present moment it is impossible to predict the extent of that need ; and it is doubtful whether, even at a later date, much can be done to forecast numbers. Any exact calculation is, however, unnecessary. The centres will not all be opened at once ; they will be opened as required. On the other hand, the buildings in which the centres will be held must be selected and the general organisation prepared. As buildings full use should be made of club premises, which the owners would in a time of emergency readily lend. The use for social purposes of the club organisation has, moreover, many and obvious advantages.
- (ii) The Employment Exchanges will be given the address of the centres. The officers will register the juveniles



either at the exchange, or at the factories in those cases where employers give notice of discharges before the event. If suitable employment cannot be offered, the boys and girls will be given a card to take to the centre. They will be informed that these centres will be treated as sub-exchanges, that officers will attend there periodically to select for vacancies, that preference in the way of employment will be given to those in attendance, and that maintenance grants, conditional on attendance, will be provided. The flow of children to the exchanges will automatically show the need for the opening of additional centres.

(iii) The provision of maintenance grants is essential. In their absence boys and girls will not attend, as both they and their parents feel (and quite rightly) that if no money is coming in they ought to be searching for employment. This was the experience in London, where centres similar to those proposed were set up to deal with the unemployment following the outbreak of war. These maintenance grants should be offered to all. There must be no poverty tests, with the attendant inquiries and delays, or a large number of children will be lost in the process. The cost should not come out of the education rates, but be a charge on public funds provided to deal with unemployment. In the case of juveniles, attendance at classes will be made a condition of any allowances given.

(iv) The officers attached to the Employment Exchanges will classify the juveniles according to their industrial qualifications. They will visit the centres periodically to select the boys or girls suitable for the available vacancies and to explain generally the condition of the labour market.

The Education Authority, on their side, will classify the juveniles at the centres according to their educational attainments. There will be found many possessing good educational qualifications, but requiring some special training to compensate for the loss they have suffered in this respect owing to the work on which they have been engaged. To such might be offered scholarships in trade schools or at courses specially designed to meet their needs.

(v) The centres should be held during the day, and half-time attendance be regarded as sufficient. It must not be expected that the classes, from the point of view of actual instruction, will have any great value. There can as a rule be no regular courses, since the individuals forming the classes will be subject to

frequent change ; but as keeping the boys and girls from widespread demoralisation they will be of the highest educational value. Physical training, gymnastics, drill, manual training, and other practical work will form the main subjects.

Centres of this kind are essential to any systematic plan of dealing with the replacement of juveniles during the demobilisation period. They serve three purposes :—

- (i) They keep the boys and girls under some sort of control.
- (ii) They enable the Employment Exchange officers to carry out the work of replacement with due regard to industrial qualifications.
- (iii) They enable the Education Authority to select for special training those likely to profit.

I offer these suggestions deeply conscious of their defects and their difficulties. Others may be able to propose additions and improvements, but so long as some definite and coherent scheme for dealing with the problem of juvenile unemployment after the war is drawn up and the organisation created prior to need I shall rest well content. If the need arises, as, in my opinion, it will arise in many parts of the country, the scheme can be put in operation without delay. If it does not arise there will perhaps be some thought and labour lost, but little money. Where preparation is inexpensive and where the issues at stake are large, neglect to prepare is without excuse.

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## AFTER-CARE: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL SERVICE.

*By Mrs. ALAN GRAY, Cambridge Education Committee.*

The aims of after-care work under the Choice of Employment Act must be more or less the same whatever the local conditions may be. But the methods adopted to attain them must naturally vary considerably in different places. My experience in after-care work has been gained in Cambridge, where the special character of the organisation of the Juvenile Employment Exchange and Bureau is due to the fact that a Juvenile Employment Agency was established there by voluntary workers in 1907. This agency was recognised by the Education Authority three years later and given an office in the Guildhall. The methods evolved during these years of voluntary work were continued with but slight modification after co-operation with the Labour Exchange was established. The work received a great impetus from its connection with the official bodies, and the assistance of the Manager of the Labour Exchange with his wide knowledge of trade conditions and prospects has been invaluable, but there can hardly be any branch of public service where the combination of official organisation and voluntary effort is more necessary. The human touch of the latter is needed to mitigate the possibly bureaucratic methods of the former.

Cambridge is a very suitable town for work of this nature. The population is only about 57,000, so the number of applicants to be dealt with assumes manageable proportions. There is only one large factory, and the town practically exists on services direct and indirect for the University. Though there are comparatively few very good positions to which a boy can aspire, yet he can still obtain an all-round training in most of the ordinary trades, and if he is ambitious, he can leave Cambridge and get a good position elsewhere when he is grown up. As the town is thus limited in size and character we are spared the rush and bustle of the large manufacturing centres, and after-care work can be carried out very thoroughly, while it is possible to gain an intimate knowledge of the boys and girls and of their home conditions.

The Exchange is managed by two Hon Secretaries (one for girls and the other for boys), with the help of the Juvenile Employment Officer. After-care work and the placing of applicants are so intimately connected that the two services are not organised in separate departments. One or other of the three workers takes a case in hand and carries it through. This method puts the social work on a natural, business basis, and

obviates any tendency on the part of the parent to regard it as philanthropic. On the other hand the official work runs no danger of becoming mechanical, and the Employment Officer is practically a paid social worker. The number of placings is not the first consideration, and an important part of the work cannot be shown by statistics. A Juvenile Employment Exchange should be a place where parents can apply for information and advice in all difficulties connected with their children. Parents often prefer to do the actual placing themselves, but they should feel at liberty to pick the brains of the Employment Officer, and a good deal of work has often been involved when they themselves have carried out the preliminary arrangements with the employer. These parents are usually of a superior class, and it is sometimes possible to persuade them to keep their boy or girl longer at school. The objects always kept in view are, (1) to make the largest possible number of applicants self-supporting, (2) to place them according to their capabilities, (3) to secure training for the physically defective, (4) to help children handicapped by poverty or ill-health, and (5) to reform unsatisfactory characters.

It is obvious that most of these objects cannot be obtained without voluntary funds, for State and rate aid cannot be given towards defraying the cost of an important part of the work. We have a list of annual subscribers, but the money is used almost entirely as a loan fund, and great pains are taken not to create the impression that the Exchange is a charitable institution. In the few cases where charity is necessary, it is obtained by co-operation with some other society, or by donations from people who are interested in a particular case. In all, some £200 a year passes through our hands. The money is used in a variety of ways, such as loans for premiums, outfits, railway fares, tools, fees for classes at the School of Arts and Crafts, Training Ships and Homes, &c. The sums lent are paid back either in full or in part, according to the circumstances of the case, through the boys' wages.

Little need be said about the normal, straightforward cases which constitute by far the largest number. When boys or girls first apply we try and set them at ease, before they are registered. This will often bring out some special taste of which the parents themselves are unaware, or which they have considered out of the question. Curiously enough this is particularly the case where girls are concerned. The parents' outlook is even more limited as to the possibilities for the future of their daughters than of their sons. The majority of the applicants have good homes and little after-care is needed, nor is it advisable. Formerly every case was visited periodically, and a guardian appointed, but it was found that these visits tended to make the boys restless and caused them to throw up their jobs in the hope of something better being found for them. It is best, if possible, to keep in touch with



them in more natural ways, such as by stopping the boy or parent in the street, or inquiring as to the boy's progress of his employer when visiting him on other business. Moreover, experience has shown that parents nearly always come back again for advice in any difficulty.

In many cases the actual placing cannot be the first consideration. Some applicants are physically so ill-developed and weakly that employers are afraid to engage them. Their health must be set up if they are ever to be self-supporting. With each applicant we receive the report of the School Medical Officer, and weakly children are treated in a variety of ways. Some who look as though they were insufficiently fed at home are sent for a time to some place to live-in where they will get good food. Surprising results are sometimes obtained even from houseboys' places, the boys returning almost unrecognisable, improved both in health, manners, and adaptability. Other anæmic-looking children are found out-door work; even the much abused tail of a van and light errand work have been known to work wonders. These cases must be watched and borne in mind so as to get the boys into permanent work as soon as they are fit for it. A case that happened recently will illustrate this point. A boy applied of a peculiar, listless appearance, owing chiefly to the fact that he was a mouth-breather; he was, besides, weakly and under-sized. He had had many situations, but no employer would keep him. His mother was induced to take him to the hospital and have the adenoids removed, and he was then sent to the country for a while. He now has no difficulty in keeping his places.

The names of deaf and dumb children who have been sent to special schools by the Education Committee are referred to the Juvenile Employment Exchange a few weeks before they are due to leave school. These cases, though not numerous, are very difficult to deal with and often entail a large amount of personal work.

The most difficult problem of all and the one emphatically for the social worker to deal with is the case of the boy whose character makes it impossible to recommend him. As a rule, home conditions or bad companions are the cause of the trouble, and the best chance, and sometimes the only thing needful, is to get the boy away from home. Successful results have been obtained by sending boys to farms in a different part of the country, and much help has been received from the Boys' Country Work Society, by whom these boys are supervised. Others are sent to Training Ships and Homes, and it is most encouraging to see the effect of discipline and a regular life on a boy who has made a bad start. Not the least important and certainly one of the most pleasant features of after-care work is the correspondence with the boys who have been placed on farms or in service, or who have been sent away to Training Ships and Homes.

Experience has shown the need of getting hold of this class of boy at an early age. We now concentrate on the younger ones, and by arrangement with the Police Court Visitors of the Vigilance Committee of the National Union of Women Workers we now receive the names of all juvenile offenders, whether of school age or over. It is a great advantage to have knowledge of these boys in advance, for when they apply at the office we know that they must be dealt with in a special way if they are to become self-supporting. The parents even come for advice long before the children have left school. In dealing with these boys the knowledge gained by the teachers of the abilities and characters of the children is invaluable, and before undertaking a difficult case they are always consulted. Some boys have definitely a moral twist, and great judgment and insight are needed in deciding whether or not to take up a particular case, for considerable expenditure is usually involved, especially when it is a question of sending a lad to an expensive Training Ship.

There is little street-trading in Cambridge, but in order to reduce it to a minimum an arrangement has been made by which applicants for street-trading licences are referred to the Juvenile Exchange before badges are issued, in order that the parents may be visited and the dangers of street-trading pointed out. It has been found that in many cases the parents disapprove of their sons taking up the work, and it has often been possible to induce the boys to go to better employment.

The Hon. Secretary for the girls is an experienced club-worker and is well known to many Cambridge girls in this capacity. This department is carried on in much the same manner as that of the boys. But the after-care work is not so heavy, as several societies exist in Cambridge for the benefit of girls. To avoid overlapping, therefore, cases out of the ordinary run are handed over to the appropriate society. The majority of the girls go to some form of domestic service, probably because other openings are comparatively few and very badly paid. On inquiry of the local Domestic Registry Offices it was found that they could do very little for girls under seventeen, and that they would welcome any action that would tend to increase the supply of well-trained servants. Girls are curiously liable to throw up their work at a moment's notice, and are often very homesick. Much influence is brought to bear on them to make them more reliable and persevering, and on the employers to induce them to give the girls a sufficiently long trial. When necessary, the money for outfits is loaned, but occasionally the mistresses are willing to make the advance themselves.

When the work was first started in Cambridge great efforts were made to induce young people to join evening classes; increased facilities and a wider range of subjects for continued education were among the first results of the establishment of

the voluntary agency. Employers were visited in order to secure their co-operation, but in very few cases could they be induced to allow their employees to leave work in time to reach the Continuation School at 7.30. Hardly any errand boys were able to attend, and it is just for this class that continued education would be so valuable. Though undoubtedly some measure of success was attained, the numbers were disappointing, and experience showed that after a ten-hour day in a workshop it was only those who were physically, mentally, and morally above the average who could be expected to join Evening Classes, or indeed gain much benefit from them. At our request an afternoon domestic class was organised in the slack season of the year as an experiment, but no fewer than sixty girls were visited before enough students could be enrolled.

Efforts have been made by the voluntary workers, as opportunities have arisen, to improve the conditions of labour and to diminish unskilled work, and there is little doubt that they have been successful in educating public opinion. Parents now frequently say that they do not want errand work for their sons, and we took it as a compliment to our efforts when a letter from an employer appeared in the local newspaper complaining of the scarcity of errand boys, and attributing this to the work of the Exchange.

One of the largest printing presses of the town was formerly a great offender in the matter of keeping boys on until they were too old to learn a trade. The standard of admission was high, but boy after boy found himself stranded at seventeen with no training. After consulting with the Juvenile Employment Committee a deputation waited on the managers, and an arrangement was made by which the name of every boy, whom it was not intended to apprentice, should be sent to the Exchange before his sixteenth birthday in order that he might not lose the chance of learning a trade before it was too late. On another occasion the Colleges were approached with a view to decreasing the demand for errand boys occasioned by the delivery of parcels to undergraduates' rooms. It was also pointed out that this practice exposed the boys to the temptation of stealing, cases of dishonesty coming from time to time before the police courts. As a result, Trinity College now arranges for the delivery of parcels inside the college by its own servants.

Opportunities of securing better pay arise when arrangements are being made for apprenticing a boy. We have special indenture forms for use when premiums are loaned and the Treasurer of the Voluntary Fund is a party to the agreement, which makes it possible to secure better terms where the money offered seems exceptionally low.

The work gives the opportunity of making investigations into the employment, hours and wages of young workers. Such an inquiry was made in 1911 by Mrs. A. V. Hill, a former



Hon. Secretary, and the results were published in a pamphlet called "The Problem of Boy Labour in Cambridge." Owing to the comparatively small size of the town it was possible to cover the whole field, and the inquiry included every boy who left the elementary schools from July 1908 to July 1910. It was continued in 1914, and it may be of interest to give some of the conclusions arrived at. Mrs. Hill found that 31·1 per cent. of the boys go straight into skilled or partly skilled work on leaving school, whilst the remaining 68·9 per cent. take up definitely unskilled work. By the time they are 19 the percentage of the former has increased to 65·2 per cent. It is evident therefore that about one-half of the boys who originally took up errand work have become more or less skilled by the time they are 19 or 20. On the other hand the percentage of those who drop out of skilled work after having begun to learn a trade on leaving school is only 2·8 per cent. Approximately 11 per cent. follow the occupations of their fathers.

Another interesting point is the frequency with which boys in unskilled work change their places. In the course of the four years under survey 93 per cent. of these boys changed their places at least once, and more than 69 per cent. more than once, whereas over 30 per cent. of the boys in skilled trades were still with the same employers.

With regard to the school standards, only 11·6 per cent. of the boys in the unskilled class had reached Standard VII., whilst 40·3 in the skilled class came from Standard VII. and Ex-VII.

The difference between the University town of Cambridge and the manufacturing centre of Oldham is illustrated by the fact that in the former between 50 per cent. and 60 per cent. of school leavers take up errand work as their first employment, whereas Mr. Cyril Jackson, in his Report on Boy Labour, gives the number in Oldham as only 1 per cent.

There can be no social work more varied and full of interest, or which requires more tact and sympathy. Interest never flags, for no two cases are alike, and problems are always arising which demand great ingenuity and knowledge of human nature. Whereas many social activities deal chiefly with the miserable, unfortunate, ne'er-do-well members of the community, the majority of applicants to a Juvenile Labour Exchange are from independent, good families, and the work, therefore, tends to give an optimistic impression of human nature. But it demands a high standard of voluntary service and cannot be usefully undertaken in odd hours. If regular service is not given it will prove uninteresting to the volunteer, who will never have the pleasure of seeing one case through from beginning to end, and unsatisfactory to the organisers, for they will not be able to entrust her with responsible work. It



is to be hoped that more and more experienced workers will come forward and avail themselves of this form of social service. Opportunities for its exercise will not be wanting, for the numbers of young people applying to the Juvenile Labour Exchanges will doubtless continue to increase steadily year by year, and we must trust that the necessary number of volunteers will be forthcoming in order that the efficiency of the work may not be diminished.

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## THE PROBLEM IN RURAL AREAS.

By W. PULLINGER, *Director of Education, Wiltshire.*

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The preface to this paper must be an apology for its shortcomings. The opinions expressed are not based upon convincing experience, the efforts made in Wilts having been small and unsuccessful. The main conclusion reached is that in existing circumstances the benefits of putting the Act into operation in the rural parts of the county are not commensurate with the labour involved. It would be regretted if this opinion were to deter others from attempting work in more suitable areas, especially as labour conditions in rural districts after the war may be very different from those upon which the arguments in this paper are based. There is a problem in the rural areas, and there is great need for its solution, but the conditions necessary for its solution do not yet exist.

### FIRST EMPLOYMENT.

The chief difficulty in Wilts is that there is very little choice of employment for either boys or girls until they are of suitable age to live away from home.

#### *Options for Boys.*

Most boys on leaving school start some form of agricultural work. This fact can be tested by an examination of the census returns for 1911 (Vol. X, Table 13, Aggregate of Rural Districts). Of the 1,197 boys "engaged in occupations" between the ages of 14 and 15—786 were employed in agriculture or closely allied work, 115 were messengers, 21 carpenters, 25 general labourers, and all other employments were negligible as offering choice. (For the whole of England and Wales the number of boys engaged in agriculture and allied work (grooms; care of horses; domestic gardeners; gamekeepers, &c.), was 24,891 out of a total of 53,333.) Vacancies in miscellaneous occupations are scattered over the whole county, which has 306 rural parishes; these vacancies must be filled by lads living at home, so that the choice in any one parish is very small indeed.

#### *For Girls.*

For girls the choice seems still more limited. This was certainly true before the War. The returns show that between 14 and 15 there were 1,112 girls unoccupied and 387 occupied; of the 387 occupied girls, 288 were engaged in domestic offices or services; for the age 15 to 16, the unoccupied numbered

667, and the occupied 626, of whom 466 were in domestic service, and the proportion engaged in such service increases in the next age group. These figures are for the rural districts and exclude country girls who take up service in the towns. It will be noted that a large number of girls do not enter service until a year after they leave school. The only considerable alternatives for girls are the making of various articles of dress. At the present time the War has opened out other possibilities, but it is uncertain how far these will be permanent.

### *Irregular dates of leaving School.*

The second difficulty arises from the fact that children leave school at all periods of the year. Their legal obligation to attend school terminates on their birthdays, or when they have passed a certain standard. They do not continue their attendance till the end of the term. In the case of boys employment is secured without difficulty before they leave school. Advice, to be effective, must be given shortly before the age when they leave. The practical difficulty consists in keeping up the interest of a local committee when the total number of cases in which they can give advice is small, and when their advice is required at irregular intervals throughout the year.

### *Village Committees.*

It must also be remembered that the number of disinterested persons in a village who are competent and willing to undertake advisory work is limited. The school teachers, when well informed, already advise parents, and other informal advice is generally available for those who seek it. If a local committee were formed in the circumstances described, the work would in practice be left in the hands of those who are already doing it. So long as the question is centred round the present school leaving age, a county committee is impotent to give advice of much value to a local committee; such guidance as they could give would be vague and ineffective.

### *Experience in Wilts.*

Bearing these things in mind the Wilts Committee decided to limit their efforts in the rural districts to a plan which could constantly remind head teachers of the importance of discussing the question with children and their parents. They instructed the head teacher of every school where the number of children was 100 or more to keep a register of the occupations which children 12 years of age or over desired to follow and for which they were mentally and physically qualified, and of employments actually followed by those who had left, together with a record of their attendance at evening schools where there were any. The headings of the register were as follows:—(1) Num-

ber ; (2) Name ; (3) Date of birth ; (4) Date of leaving school ; (5) Standard reached at 12 years of age ; (6) Standard on leaving ; (7) Reports on : (a) Handwriting, (b) English, (c) Arithmetic, (d) Intelligence, (e) Special aptitudes, (f) Manual training ; (8) Reports on : (a) Health, (b) Attendance, (c) Conduct ; (9) Occupation desired ; (10) Opinion as to suitability for occupation desired ; (11) Advice (if any) given to parents ; Employment definitely secured : (12) Nature ; (13) Employer ; (14) Weekly wages ; (15) Hours per week ; (16) Whether attending evening school. (Give sessions.) Additional confidential notes were to be added in special cases. Extracts from these registers were to be supplied on request to prospective employers, to the officers of Labour Exchanges, and to the County Committee. General instructions were given upon the procedure to be followed in advising children and their parents and in calling the attention of employers to the advantages of consulting the register. Cases of special difficulty were to be referred to the County Committee for advice.

The effect of this procedure was disappointing. Few cases were referred to the Committee, and these were nearly all cases of mental or physical disability. Though some of the registers gave evidence that teachers were devoting increased attention to the question, it is doubtful whether the majority considered the procedure otherwise than as an unnecessary addition to their clerical labours. The evidence of success was so slight that the Committee tacitly allowed the work to fall into abeyance. In February 1917, at the suggestion of His Majesty's Inspector, the Committee renewed their effort by the issue of a card, which is now hung in a prominent place in every rural school. It reads as follows :—

#### WILTS COUNTY COUNCIL.

##### GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

##### *Choice of Employment.*

“ Any child who has no prospect of securing suitable employment after leaving school in the locality in which he or she lives, and any child who desires to be trained for a special occupation, may apply to the County Education Committee for advice. Applications for advice should be made through the head teacher or correspondent of the school to the undersigned.

“ W. PULLINGER,  
 “ Education Department,                      Director of Education.”  
 County Offices, Trowbridge,  
 February, 1917.”

Up to the present time only three cases have been referred to the Committee as a result of this announcement ; it is possible the advice given may have proved useful in these cases.



The conclusions to which the Committee have come on general principles and as the result of this inadequate experiment may be summed up as follows:—(1) At the age when children leave school in Wilts there is little chance of giving effective guidance. (2) Unless older children are under some form of school influence, advice is difficult to impart. (3) The advantages resulting from the intervention of a County Committee are out of proportion to the efforts involved by a thorough organisation.

### PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT.

It now remains to consider whether effective work could be conducted if school discipline were maintained until a later age. The Census returns are again of service, and reveal certain facts of great interest and importance, especially in the case of boys.

#### *Males.*

The following table shows the number of males at different ages employed in agriculture. A gives the total number employed on farms, woods, and gardens. B gives the same number, less the number of farmers, graziers, and relatives who assist them; B thus includes the mass of employees:—

Ages.	14-15.	15-16.	16-17.	17-18.	18-19.	19-20.	20-25.	25-35.	35-45.
A	724	728	760	747	658	612	545	Average s. 460	421
B	667	644	664	637	557	519	457	372	332

From these figures it is clear that agriculture employs twice as many boys as it can permanently absorb. Youths begin to leave the land at 16; the loss at 18 is great and is maintained until the age of about 20, when it becomes much slower.

Similar figures under head B are given for adjacent counties in some of which industrial work is more abundant:—

County.	14-15.	15-16.	16-17.	17-18.	18-19.	19-20.	20-25.	25-35.	35-45.
Berks -	352	391	395	416	333	348	255	Average s. 213	207
Dorset -	389	442	468	496	413	406	342	253	239
Gloucester	622	645	679	675	588	540	426	327	335
Hants -	576	761	884	819	736	700	578	488	460
Somerset	701	770	815	744	664	624	479	366	363

The first question to be solved is why so many youths abandon agriculture. The answer is easy to find. Many investigations confirm the opinion that they leave because they are no longer wanted; there is work for only a limited number of men and the rest must find other occupations. The prime factor in the depopulation of the land is neither wages nor housing, not the attractiveness of town life nor distaste for agriculture (vitally important though these are), but simply that the demand for men is limited.

The results of the war will no doubt increase the demand for agricultural labour; for some years fewer youths will migrate to the towns, but when the supply has overtaken the new demand the movement to the towns will be greater than before, for there will be more families in the country and more youths for whom employment must be found. Now if it be admitted that migration is inevitable, the interests of the migrants require careful consideration. At 16 and until 20 years of age, or even later, they seek new forms of employment. How do their chances of success compare with those of town lads who have a start of some years? Does their work on the land help or hinder their career? Does migration take place early enough, or should some plan be adopted for promoting an earlier change for those who must inevitably leave the land? Many, no doubt, postpone the change either in the hope of securing permanent and lucrative employment in agriculture or for other reasons until thoughts of marriage compel them to consider their future prospects. These are the real choice of employment questions in rural districts. The migrating age is the time when guidance is wanted; the earlier period is one of preparation in which continued education should take the most prominent part.

To clear the air of misconceptions, it should be recognised that for 50 per cent. of country lads in normal times agriculture is a blind alley. It must also be admitted that lads must of necessity enter that blind alley. It is undesirable they should leave home and live in lodgings at 14 years of age; if they wanted to do so their wages would be too small to support them. Life on the land during adolescence is of immense benefit to their health, and if the waiting period is used to the best advantage the handicap of a late start in some other calling may be balanced by this benefit; but the age when the change is made should not be determined as at present by casual circumstances, nor should it be too great.

### *Females.*

The case of girls is simpler than that of boys. From the figures given below it is clear that many girls enter domestic service between 14 and 15 and that the number increases the following year. The table is incomplete as it fails to show the number of girls who enter service in urban districts. The

problem for them is not the choice of a new employment but the continuation of an old one. While they live at home the chief concern of their advisers should be the nature of the education the girls receive. It may be the larger opportunities for the employment of women opened out by the war will materially alter this state of things.

*No. of Females engaged in Indoor Service in Rural Districts of Wilts.*

Ages.	14-15.	15-16.	16-17.	17-18.	18-19.	19-20.	20-25.
Totals "engaged in occupations."	387	626	673	730	726	675	Average. —
No. "engaged in indoor service."	275	448	471	478	466	461	341

No attempt has been made in Wilts to guide lads of the migrating age in their choice of employment. By that time they are cut adrift from school influences, except where there are evening schools. Any attempt to influence them to abandon agriculture would be open to very severe criticism. Before any action of that sort can be taken employers must be convinced that the views outlined above are correct, and that organisation is necessary in the lads' interests. If such an understanding could be reached it would be possible to do much useful advisory work, provided that continuation schools became compulsory, and lads could leave school at defined periods of the year.

It has been suggested that a constructive programme might be sketched out for effective work in rural districts. If the contentions set out in this paper be correct, success would be contingent on the conditions named in the last paragraph being established; some such plan as the following might then be possible:—

1. The County Committee would act as a co-ordinating and directing authority. It would be essential that they should employ an officer who could devote his whole time to the work.

2. Small advisory committees would be necessary in each village, on which the head teachers of schools would serve.

3. The usual records would be kept from the age of 13 onwards.

4. Just before a child left school, *i.e.*, toward the end of each term, his parents would be invited to discuss his future career with the Committee. Whether they accepted this invitation or not, a school-leaving report would be sent to them; to this would be appended general advice on employment based

on the child's inclinations, ability and physique. This would be revised a year later, in the light of the child's experience. At the age of 16 there would be another formal interview, this time with the child as well as with the parents. It should then be possible to outline definite proposals for permanent occupation. This would be followed, if desired, by attempts to secure suitable permanent employment for those who must abandon agriculture and those who definitely decide to do so. The fact that all cases would be dealt with at the same periods of the year would be sufficient to enlist and maintain interest on the part of the local committee. After-care work would be transferred to the local committees in the towns where the children were employed.

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In conclusion, it is hoped nothing in this paper will be regarded as antagonistic to agricultural interests. The depopulation of rural districts is on all accounts to be deplored, but it will not improve matters to shut our eyes to obvious facts. Organised efforts such as those outlined would not affect the number of migrants, but would secure that a class better suited for agriculture would remain in the country. At present, unfortunately, the talented and enterprising are the first to take up new work in the towns. If more labourers on the land are wanted after the war, there will be no difficulty in persuading lads to continue agriculture, provided that work is offered them, at an adequate wage, and good cottages are built for them to live in.